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ABSTRACT

Noting that attitudes and habits formed very early in life can have an impact on a child's decision to use drugs or remain drug free later in life, this packet of materials introduces preschool children to the important skills and attitudes they will need to avoid drug use later on. None of the materials provided for children directly addresses drugs or drug use, but rather offer appealing and engaging stories designed to help children build self-confidence, develop decision-making and critical-thinking skills, and understand limits. The adult materials consist of Building Blocks guides to helping preschoolers grow up alcohol and drug free, and include one guide for parents and one for caregivers; a guide for home visitors with drug education messages about health and safety for preschool children and their families, with a companion magazine for parents; and "Ready, Set, Go," an adventure book for children. The remaining children's materials consist of Building Blocks story books as follows: (for 3-year-olds) "Keisha Ann: That's Who I Am," and "Who Can Help Me?"; (for 4-year-olds) "Get Ready...Here I Go," and "I'm Such a Big Help!"; (for 5-year-olds) "Super Duper Timmy Cooper" and "Denton's Detectives." All of the stories and adult materials are multicultural. (HTH)

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Drug Prevention for Early Childhood

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PS 024070

BUILDING BLOCKS

HELPING PRESCHOOLERS GROW UP ALCOHOL AND DRUG FREE

GUIDE FOR PARENTS

PS 024070

BUILDING BLOCKS

Helping Preschoolers Grow Up Alcohol and Drug Free

GUIDE FOR PARENTS

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Letter To Parents

Dear Parents:

Soon your children will be hearing stories from a picture book series called Building Blocks.

Building Blocks books are specially written to help young children grow up to be alcohol and drug free.

Many of us worry that our children may become involved with drugs when they get older. We do not realize that the skills and abilities that our children begin developing when they are three, four and five years old can have an influence on whether they will use drugs when they get older.

These skills and abilities include:

- Self-concept and self-confidence
- A sense of personal responsibility and responsibility towards others
- Trust in self and trust in others
- An understanding of the difference between fantasy and reality
- An ability to solve problems

The Building Blocks program does not talk about alcohol and drug use directly. Instead, it uses stories to show young children the kinds of skills and behaviors they should be developing now that will protect them from alcohol and drug use later.

Helping Preschoolers Grow Up Alcohol and Drug Free

As a group, drug-free children are confident and responsible. They have learned to take care of themselves and to be concerned about their friends and family.

From the time they are very young, children who grow up drug free get along well with other children. They have good relationships with at least one parent, guardian or other adult who is important in their lives and, based on that experience, know that adults can be trusted. As a result, drug-free children feel secure. They also tend to listen to adults and believe what they say.

Because an adult has taken an interest in them, helped them learn to care for themselves and praised them for their efforts, drug-free children have developed a sense of competence. They understand that if they work at something, they can learn to do it. As a result, they feel proud, capable, and comfortable within their world of family, school, and neighborhood.

In addition to this positive self-concept, drug-free children also have other things in common. Most grow up in homes where alcohol is not abused. Even if there are drugs in the neighborhood, the drug-free child's parent or guardian does not use illegal drugs and expresses strong, negative feelings about drug use and the problems it can cause.

Often, children who grow up to use alcohol and drugs are likely to have problems obeying rules and getting along with other children. By the time they are six years old, many of these children show signs of being both verbally and physically aggressive. As they grow older, these children feel more and more like outsiders and do not see themselves as fitting in. Many of them are poor students and find it hard to do well in anything related to school; nor do they find other areas (such as art, music, or sports) where they can prove themselves. Since many grow up in homes where alcohol is abused and illegal drugs are used, it is not surprising that they turn to alcohol, marijuana, inhalants, or crack to pass the time, to feel good, and to escape from the demands of a world for which they are unprepared.

WHAT CAN PARENTS DO?

As parents, the most important things you can do to help children grow up alcohol and drug free are to:

- Encourage positive self-concept by identifying tasks preschoolers can do (feeding themselves, buttoning and zipping clothes, brushing their teeth), showing them how to do each task, giving them opportunities to practice each new skill, and praising them for their efforts.

- Show them adults can be trusted by providing a good example yourself and pointing out other trustworthy adults in the community (teacher, mail carrier, firefighter, police officer, librarian).
- Encourage them to perform tasks that are appropriate for their age level (feeding the goldfish, putting their toys away, clearing the table) and let them know what a big help they are.
- Help them develop problem-solving skills by involving them in household chores that require some thought. For example, young children may drop silverware when they clear the table. You might say, "It's hard to manage all those forks and spoons. What can we do to keep the silverware from dropping?" Then, together with your child, talk about some ideas for solving the problem. "What if we put them in a bowl or tray before we remove them from the table. Would that work better?"
- Find a skill, personality trait or talent in your child that makes him or her special. Comment positively about it as often as possible. (Try to avoid commenting on such things as personal appearance or clothing.)
- Help them develop responsibility for their own personal health habits by encouraging children to wash their hands, brush their hair, clean their teeth, and eat wisely. Children who are used to taking care of their bodies are better able to understand that illegal drugs and alcohol can hurt them. Therefore, they are more likely to listen to warnings against their use.
- Emphasize the beauty and pleasure to be found in the real world. Although young children enjoy make-believe and can learn much from pretending, it is important that they know the difference between fantasy and reality. Children who enjoy the real world and feel comfortable in it are much less likely to believe that quick and magical solutions like drugs or alcohol will help them with their problems.
- Develop family rules that apply to all family members. Repeat your family's rules about giving out medicines and handling these products in the home. Make sure children understand that there are reasons for these rules. For example, "If you take the wrong medicine, you will still feel sick. If you take too much, you may feel even sicker." Tell them in advance what will happen if they break these rules. Make sure you follow through with an appropriate action every time a rule is broken, such as not permitting a favorite TV program to be watched.

WHAT ARE THE PICTURE BOOKS ABOUT?

The Building Blocks books fall into three groups.

The first two stories, *Keisha Ann: That's Who I Am* and *Who Can Help Me?*, feature three-year-olds who are learning to take responsibility for themselves and to trust adults to help them solve problems.

The second group of Building Blocks books focuses on four-year-olds whose ideas about personal responsibility expand to include planning in *Get Ready . . . Here I Go* and the desire to help others in *I'm Such a Big Help!*.

The last two books in the series, *Super Duper Timmy Cooper* and *Denton's Detectives*, concern five-year-olds who learn the difference between fantasy and reality and sharpen their problem-solving skills.

Your child's family child care provider or preschool teacher will read each story to your child, discuss it, and follow it up with activities to help your child more fully develop the characteristic shown in the story.

When your child brings home the "Things To Do at Home" page that accompanies each Building Blocks story, you will know which book was read that day.

You are the most important person in your child's life. Your participation in the at-home Building Blocks activities will encourage your child to practice the skills and behaviors shown in each book and make them a part of his or her daily routine.

The following are outlines of each story with suggestions for at-home activities to help you talk with your child about what happened in each Building Blocks book.

For your information and convenience, the following items are also included:

- Questions Parents Often Ask About Alcohol and Other Drugs
- Sources of Information on Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Prevention
- For Help With Treatment And Referrals
- A mail-in coupon for ordering a free copy of *A Parent's Guide to Prevention: Growing Up Drug Free*, published by the U.S. Department of Education.

Keisha Ann: That's Who I Am

Keisha Ann: That's Who I Am is a rhyming story featuring three-year-old Keisha Ann, a lively, African-American girl who lives in a city townhouse with her mother, her father, her big brother, and her pet cat, Fuzzycat. Keisha Ann's grandmother lives nearby and is an important part of Keisha Ann's family.

In the story, Keisha Ann tells all about her life. She describes her daily activities and gives a tour of her house, including her favorite hideaway in the attic.

Keisha Ann talks happily about being a big girl who can dress herself, hang up her clothes, brush her teeth, and help set the table.

The purpose behind Keisha Ann's story is to show young children that Keisha Ann feels proud because she can do things herself. Preschoolers who develop a healthy self-concept like Keisha Ann's are less likely to become involved with alcohol and other drugs when they grow older. They already feel good about themselves and do not need a drug to produce these feelings for them.

One of the reasons Keisha Ann is so capable is that her parents and grandmother spend time with her to teach her the simple skills she needs to take care of herself. They help her as she learns each new skill and they praise her for her efforts. Keisha Ann feels close to them because they care for her and give her what she needs to become a competent person.

THINGS TO DO AT HOME

1. Ask your child to tell you about Keisha Ann.
2. Talk to your child about all the "big" boy and girl things he or she can do (for example, brushing teeth, washing hands). Ask if Keisha Ann could do things your child cannot do, and offer to help him or her to learn that skill.
3. Ask your child to draw a picture of himself or herself. Even if the drawing does not look like your child, use the finished picture to talk about how happy your child makes you feel. For example, you might say, "When I come home from work and see your smiling face, I feel wonderful."
4. Suggest that you and your child make a Responsibility Chart together. The chart should list the child's chores (help set the table, hang up pajamas, and so on) and include a picture of each task. You might want to display the chart on the refrigerator.

5. Find books in the library or bookmobile or pictures in magazines that show young children helping out at home. Share these with your child and ask whether he or she would like to do what the children in the picture are doing. You might want to cut pictures out of old magazines and use them to make the Responsibility Chart.
6. Find ways to talk to your child about what he or she can and cannot do. For example, "You are doing a good job setting out the forks and spoons. I will put out the knives because they are too sharp for you to handle." "You have gotten so big, you can reach the toothpaste and put it on your toothbrush. But, you cannot take anything else from the medicine cabinet. Only Mommy or Daddy or Grandma can get those things for you."

Who Can Help Me?

Three-year-old Matthew Manning (nicknamed M&M) will be going off to day care in a few days. He lives in the country with his father, sisters, and pets and is nervous about going to day care for the first time. He worries about all the things he cannot do by himself such as getting home from day care, getting medicine if he is sick, and getting to the places he might need to go.

M&M's father calms his fears by making a plan with him that describes which adults will help M&M with these things. His dad also reminds M&M that only the people he names can help M&M.

We know that children who have good relationships with responsible adults are much less likely to use alcohol and drugs. *Who Can Help Me?* encourages three-year-olds to trust adults, to identify adults who are trustworthy and to understand that certain activities (such as taking medicine) should only be done with the help of a trustworthy adult.

Who Can Help Me? is a participatory question and answer book. At certain points in the story, the reader asks the young listeners, "Who can help M&M?" with a special task. The children then are told to pick out that person from among the other characters in a group picture. The questions help to hold the children's attention. They also help preschoolers begin the process of making judgements. Children who learn how to make good judgements are much less likely to use drugs when they are older.

THINGS TO DO AT HOME

1. Ask your child to tell you M&M's story.
2. Talk to your child about who can help him or her with important activities. You might say, "We have rules about helpers just like the boy in the story. Only Mom, Dad, and Grandma can give you medicine" or "The only people who can take you on a bus or drive you in a car are Mom and Dad." Be sure to go over this list many times so your child is sure about it. You might ask your child to draw a picture of the people who can help him or her do certain things.
3. When you go out with your child, point out police officers and store security guards. Introduce your child to trusted neighbors, the librarian, and other adults who can help in an emergency.
4. Make sure your child knows his or her full name, address, and telephone number. You can make a game of it and ask for this information often until he or she knows it by heart.

5. If you have 911 emergency telephone service in your community, make sure your child knows what it is and how to use it. Help your child act out the process of making an emergency call until you are satisfied that he or she knows what to do. Together with your child, make an emergency telephone number label and post it by the phone.

Get Ready . . . Here I Go

In this story, four-year-old Luis makes up his own plan for getting ready for preschool. Luis lives with his Hispanic-American family in a city apartment. Family members include his mother, father, aunt (Tia Lucia), grandfather (Papá Grande), and baby brother (Carlos).

Luis' plan consists of five steps that he will follow, in a certain order, every day. He is very proud of his plan and cannot wait to show it off to his family.

As Luis goes through each step, the young audience first sees all the things Luis can do for himself. They also see how willingly and capably Luis performs each task, and how one activity leads to another. In addition to being responsible for himself, the children see that Luis is concerned about how his actions affect the rest of the family. For example, when Luis dresses himself, he is careful to be quiet so he does not wake his baby brother.

Get Ready . . . Here I Go expands on the idea of personal responsibility which was first discussed in the Building Blocks books for three-year-olds. In *Get Ready*, the main character begins to understand that taking responsibility includes more than simply doing a task or chore; it also means doing it at the right time, in the right order, and in the right way. For example, Luis brushes his teeth after eating, and he washes before dressing. Through his plan, Luis is learning to think before he acts. Children who later become involved with drugs are often impulsive. They behave in quick and hasty ways, rushing headlong into action without thinking. One way to help children lay the foundation for decision-making later on is to encourage them to make plans the way Luis does.

THINGS TO DO AT HOME

1. Ask your child to tell you what Luis was so excited about.
2. Hold a family meeting to talk about what everyone must do to get ready for the day. Talk about the differences between what children do and adults do. Spell out each person's responsibilities and explain how they help the family as a whole. For example, "When you help clear the table, that gives me the extra time I need to get dressed."
3. In *Get Ready . . . Here I Go*, Luis describes the steps he must take to get ready for preschool. In step 1, he leaves the bedroom quietly without waking his brother. In step 2, he washes his hands and face, and so on. Work with your child to make a step map or list of what he or she needs to do to get ready for each day. This kind of activity will

help to improve your child's thinking skills as well as encourage cooperation and participation in your family's morning routine.

4. When planning family outings, parties, or get-togethers, invite your child to participate. Ask what needs to happen first, second, and third. Use your fingers to reinforce the order of each activity so your child sees and hears the sequence of events. As your child becomes used to this approach, ask him or her to come up with the steps that must be taken.

5. When your child needs to do something, help him or her by breaking the job down into small, manageable tasks. For example, when it is time to put the toys away, suggest that your child start by picking up the crayons and putting them in a box, then putting the paper on the shelf, then storing the blocks in the closet or their special container, and so on.

6. Describe your own planning process aloud as you work around your home, "First, I'll wash off the lettuce. While it dries, I'll cut up the cucumbers and other vegetables. Then I'll toss them all together in this bowl and our salad will be ready for supper." The more children hear and see planning in process, the more likely they will be to adopt this approach as their own.

I'm Such a Big Help!

The main character in this humorous story is a four-year-old, Asian-American girl. Jennifer Han lives in the suburbs with her mother, father, and baby sister.

Jennifer is trying very hard to be helpful to others, but has not completely mastered all the skills she is learning. For example, when she pours the juice at breakfast, she fills the glass too full and it overflows. When she dresses her baby sister, she stuffs both of her sister's legs into one pant leg of the baby's overalls. And when she helps her mother sort the laundry, she sometimes gets the socks mixed up.

Despite these missteps, Jennifer's parents and adult neighbors welcome her help and are happy to see her trying so hard. They know that a good deal of trial and error is involved in learning a new skill.

When children are supported in their efforts by caring adults, they are more likely to work hard at something until they master it. They grow to understand that setbacks and frustration are part of the learning process and begin to take them in stride.

In contrast, many children who grow up to use drugs and alcohol do not get much pleasure from school, sports, or hobbies, since their skills are not strong enough in any one area to provide them with a sense of enjoyment. They have not developed the patience they need to overcome frustration and stick with a task long enough to do it well. As a result, they very often feel inadequate and worthless. Many turn to drugs and alcohol to get the good feelings other children obtain from their accomplishments.

A second idea presented in the book concerns responsibility toward others. Jennifer really wants to help the members of her family and her neighbors. Children who contribute to their families by cooperating in everyday tasks feel important and worthwhile. As they grow older, it is only natural for them to extend their desire to help outward to the larger community. Children who become involved with drugs and alcohol, however, often lack a feeling of responsibility towards others. They do not feel they have any role to play in the world around them because they never learned to play an effective role in family life.

THINGS TO DO AT HOME

1. Ask your child to tell you some of the things Jennifer helped to do at home.
2. Take a walk with your child through your home. Try to identify all the chores that need to be done to keep the household running smoothly. Point out one task that adults can do (vacuum the floors), one that children can do (pick up newspapers or

toys), and one that adults and children can do together (fold laundry, dust, or wash and dry the dishes).

3. Together, decide on one or two chores your child can do to help the family out. Make a chart for the chores and put it on the refrigerator or another handy spot. Let your child keep track of his or her completed chores by helping him or her check off the chart each day. Keep in mind that four-year-olds are very eager to try new things, but often make mistakes. It is important to praise your child's efforts while gently telling or showing him or her how to do the chore correctly, without losing your patience.
4. Plan a time when you will show your child how to do something new that can be shared with the family and work with him or her until it is completed. Making a dessert for a family dinner, making simple holiday decorations, and picking flowers for the kitchen table are activities young children enjoy and do well.
5. Remember to thank your child every time a chore is completed, especially one he or she has agreed to do. Tell your child how his or her help has saved you time or work, or made things easier or more pleasant for everyone in the family.

Super Duper Timmy Cooper

Timmy Cooper is a five-year-old, African-American boy who lives in the city with his mother and father. Timmy likes to go to the park every Saturday with his dad. Sometimes his dog, Duke, goes along.

In the story, Timmy's biggest wish is to do a flip on the park jungle gym and land on his feet without falling. Timmy practices on the jungle gym for several weeks, but becomes frustrated when he is not successful. One day, he decides to act like his favorite super hero, thinking it will help him reach his goal. He puts on a cape, says magic words, calls himself Super Duper Timmy Cooper, and returns to the park to try again as a "super hero." When he finally does a flip, he thinks it is because of his "super powers."

Timmy is so impressed with what he thinks super powers can do that he tries to make a super buddy out of his dog, Duke. When the dog refuses to follow his directions, Timmy becomes upset and tells his parents what he has been trying to do with Duke. Timmy's parents tell him that super powers do not work in real life. Although it is fun to wear a cape and say magic words, they explain that Timmy learned to flip because of his hard work. They tell him the only way Duke can learn to do tricks is if Timmy spends the time and energy it takes to train him.

The purpose of this story is to help young children understand the difference between what is real and what is not. Many pre-teens and teens who use drugs say that when they are high their problems "disappear like magic." They feel good, confident, smart, and powerful without any effort on their part. They are too willing to believe that a pill or a beer or a marijuana cigarette can improve or change their situation in some way. The truth, of course, is that these so-called improvements are only temporary and the problems and responsibilities of real life remain after the high wears off. These teens are confused about the difference between fantasy and reality.

Some parents worry when their young children have imaginary friends. There is, however, a significant difference between a five-year-old with a make-believe friend and a twelve-year-old who thinks that a drug can solve his or her problems. Even though they cannot put their understanding into words, children with make-believe friends know they are imaginary. In contrast to older children who use fantasy to escape from the challenges of daily life, young children use their "friends" in a positive way to help them face fears or loneliness.

Children who are aware of the difference between fantasy and reality are much less likely to believe that drugs and alcohol will solve their problems, improve their lives, or change them in some special way. They are more likely to question the positive claims made for drugs and alcohol and are better able to say no and mean it.

THINGS TO DO AT HOME

1. Ask your child to tell you what Timmy wanted to do.
2. Watch some Saturday morning cartoons with your child. Ask your child if the characters are real or pretend. If your child is unclear, gently point out the differences between real animals and people, and pretend animals and people (for example, real people cannot fly and real dogs cannot talk).
3. Take your child to the library or use books or magazines you may have at home. Find pictures of real animals and talk about what each animal is like. Then find a book with fantasy animals as characters. Ask your child to tell you which animals are real and which are pretend. Again, ask your child to explain what the differences are. Librarians often can make good suggestions about what books to select.
4. When you go by a pet store or to the zoo or circus, talk to your child about the work involved in taking care of animals. Describe how long it takes to train a pet or performing animal. Emphasize the difference between real animals and the animals in books or on television.
5. When you hear ads on the radio or see them in magazines or on television, talk to your child about what the ad says or suggests and compare the ad with what the product is really like. Ads for children's toys, for example, can be misleading. Point out the differences between what the ad seems to promise and what the product really turns out to be.

Denton's Detectives

The children at Mrs. Denton's family child care home are so good at solving problems, they are known as Denton's Detectives. When they are about to begin a new project, the children like to investigate it first and get all the facts before they start.

When Mrs. Denton tells the children they will be planting a carrot garden, the detectives want to know where they should plant the seeds and how much they should water. To learn the answers to these questions, the children talk to the produce man at the supermarket, the children's librarian, and one of Mrs. Denton's neighbors who is a skilled gardener. Then they test out the information they have received and, once they are satisfied with the results, they work together to plant the carrot garden.

At first all goes well, but then the plants begin to disappear. To understand why, the children investigate and find out that rabbits are eating the carrots. Their solution is to fence in their carrot garden and plant a second, unfenced garden for the rabbits.

When the fenced garden produces more carrots than the children can eat, the detectives have another problem, "What can they do with the extra carrots?" Their solution is to use the surplus carrots to dye T-shirts, bake muffins, and make jewelry. When they have completed their "carrot projects," they decide to share them at a Carrot Carnival that they hold for their parents and friends.

In *Denton's Detectives*, the children learn that what they do to the garden will determine how the carrots turn out. The carrots did not grow by accident or magic. They grew because they were planted in soil and received the right amount of light and water. In the same way, the plants did not just disappear. The rabbits ate them.

The point of *Denton's Detectives* is to help children understand that if you take a certain action, something will happen as a result. Also, if you think about something before you do it and get all the facts together before you act, you will have a pretty good idea of what the results will be.

Understanding the connection between actions and consequences is particularly important in preventing alcohol and other drug use. Children who can think about what alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs will do to them (for example, get them into trouble, make them sick, give them bad breath) are better able to refuse drugs when they are offered. Such children have the skills they need to consider a problem or situation critically. They are then able to think about the effect a particular action could have on them and make a decision about what to do based on those effects. Children who learn to think first are much less likely to take dangerous risks.

A second theme in *Denton's Detectives* concerns cooperative learning. The children in the family child care home work together to solve problems and to complete projects. They take pride in their group identity as Denton's Detectives and share in the fun that their group efforts produce.

One characteristic of drug-using children is their failure to "fit in" or belong to a positive group. Unfortunately, "druggie" groups, just like gangs, give alienated youngsters a needed sense of identity. By encouraging young children to participate in appropriate group activities while they are growing up, you give them many opportunities to receive positive support from peers. As a result, they will be less attracted to groups involved in risky or unhealthy behavior.

THINGS TO DO AT HOME

1. Ask your child to tell you about Denton's Detectives and the garden.
2. Help your child plant some seeds (mung beans and alfalfa are easy to grow) in a small tray or empty egg carton. Talk about everything that needs to be done to help the seeds grow. Remind your child to water the seeds and comment on the results so the child sees the connection between what he or she does and the plants' growth.
3. Take a walk through your neighborhood. Point out different kinds of plants and trees and talk about how to take care of them. Mention some problems that occur (for example, leaves piling up on lawns or sidewalks, tree limbs touching power lines, bushes blocking signs). Ask your child how these problems might be solved (raking leaves or trimming trees and bushes).
4. Work together with other families in your area to clean up some part of the neighborhood. Have a block party afterwards as a reward.
5. Plan a family meal in which everyone is responsible for something (for example, a salad, bread, beverage, and so on). Make sure the child understands that the meal is the result of everyone working together and doing their part.
6. Work with all the members of the family to put together a food package for people in need. Talk about what should go into the package. Use this as an opportunity to talk about responsibility towards others and different ways that problems can be solved when people work together cooperatively.
7. Introduce opportunities for problem-solving at home and involve your child whenever possible. For example, "You want to paint or play with play dough. I want you to be able to do so, but I just washed the floor and I'm afraid it will get dirty. What can we

do?" Help your child come up with solutions like putting newspaper on the floor. Then praise your child for being a good problem solver.

The Parent's Role in Rearing a Drug-Free Child

No one cares more about an individual child than his or her parents. You are the child's first and most important teacher and provide the model for his or her positive behavior. When you support and reinforce the developmental efforts underway at your child's preschool or day care program, you help to ensure its success. By participating in the Building Blocks program and educating yourself about alcohol and other drugs, you are contributing significantly to your child's drug-free future.

QUESTIONS PARENTS OFTEN ASK ABOUT ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS

1. *"I am a single mother with two young boys. My younger brother loves my kids and spends most weekends with them. He has a good job and takes them to the zoo, the movies and the playground for basketball and other games. The problem is my brother smokes pot. He talks about drugs and uses marijuana when he is with my kids. At heart, he's a good guy and he's my sons' only male role model. What should I do?"*

   Even though you love your brother and do not want to hurt him, your children's safety and healthy future must come first. You need to talk openly with your brother about his drug use. You must tell him that he cannot use drugs if he wants to continue to see your sons, nor can he talk about drugs in front of them.

   While your brother is using drugs, his judgement is not what it should be. If he's driving, his reflexes are not as good as they should be, either. Your children are in danger while they are in a car with him.

   Also, your brother's drug use has not caught up with him yet, but it may. He may be arrested and go to jail because of his drug use. If your children are with him when he is caught, it will be very frightening for them.

   Your brother is your sons' role model. They are seeing their favorite uncle break the law and use drugs without getting into trouble or having any problems. No matter what you say about drugs, your sons will think that drugs are OK because your brother uses them. Therefore, your children may be much more likely to use them.

   If your brother cannot accept your conditions about no drug use, you cannot let him continue his relationship with your sons. The risk is too great.

2. *"My children have a friend who uses drugs. They want to help her. What can they do?"*

   While your children can continue to support their friend during this difficult time in her life, you or some other adult needs to step in now. This is not a task children should take on. In most cases, the best thing to do is to contact the child's parents. They may not want to hear what you have to say at first, but they must be told. Children need the help of a caring adult to overcome a drug problem. Once parents know their child is in trouble, they can talk to a doctor, a member of the clergy, a mental health counselor, or a drug treatment counselor for advice on how to handle the problem.

3. *"My 12- and 13-year-old kids are talking about drugs a lot lately. I hear them say things like, 'Marijuana's not that bad, parents just don't want anyone to have any fun.' Should I be worried or is this just empty talk?"*

   You should be concerned. When children talk about drugs in a positive way, they are almost always using them. Tell your children that you're worried, repeat your rules about not using drugs and what you will do if you find they are breaking your rules, and stay alert for physical signs that they are using drugs. If you have any doubts, tell them you will have a urine test taken. Often, this is enough to stop the drug use. Be prepared to follow through on your threat if they are using drugs.

4. *"My father has a drinking problem and often gets drunk in front of my three- and five-year-old. My mother says to ignore it, that the kids are too young to know what's going on. But I am worried. Should I say something to my kids?"*

   Your children may not know their grandfather is an alcoholic, but they are seeing behavior they should not. Tell your mother that you can no longer allow your children to see their grandfather drunk because it sets a bad example for them. Your children also may be thinking that they are the reason their grandfather behaves so badly.

   You may want to contact Al-Anon (look in your telephone book for a local number), an organization that helps families of alcoholics understand what is going on and how they can help the alcoholic.

   Sometimes, problem drinkers will respond to threats from loved ones and get help from Alcoholics Anonymous or other recovery programs. However, if your father continues to drink, keep your children away from him and try to think of ways they can continue their relationship with your mother without his participation.

5. *"My friend says when kids smoke tobacco cigarettes, there is a good chance they will use other drugs. Can this be true?"*

   Yes. Children who smoke tobacco cigarettes are much more likely to drink alcohol and use marijuana than non-smokers. Tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana are known as "gateway" drugs (or "steppingstone" drugs) because children who use them often go on to use other drugs.

Many adults do not realize that tobacco is addictive. In fact, it is just as habit-forming as heroin. In addition, once children learn to smoke tobacco cigarettes, they are much less afraid to smoke marijuana or crack because they know how to inhale.

After children have tried tobacco, they are less concerned about breaking rules and will often begin drinking. Children who use alcohol then understand what it means to get intoxicated and are much more likely to try marijuana, crack and other drugs that also promise a "high" or a "rush."

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG ABUSE PREVENTION

Alcoholics Anonymous Service Office

P.O. Box 459
Grand Central Station
New York, New York 10163
(212) 870–3400
Self-help recovery organization for alcohol abusers of all ages. Check your telephone directory for local meetings.

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters

P.O. Box 862 Mid-Town Station
New York, New York 10018
800–356–9996
Provides assistance and information to families of alcohol abusers. Check your telephone directory for local listings.

American Council for Drug Education

136 E. 64th St.
New York, New York 10021
(212) 758-8060

Provides pamphlets, fact sheets, and videos on drugs and alcohol. Call for a free catalog.

American Lung Association

1740 Broadway
New York, New York 10019
(212) 315–8700
Provides materials on the dangers of smoking. Check your telephone directory for listing of local affiliates.

Children of Alcoholics Foundation, Inc.

200 Park Avenue, 31st Floor
New York, New York 10166
(212) 351–2680
Provides general information and an excellent guide to resources available for children of alcoholics.

Families in Action

2296 Henderson Mill Road, Suite 300
Atlanta, Georgia 30345
(404) 934–6364
Offers materials to families coping with or attempting to prevent alcohol and other drug abuse.

National Association for Children of Alcoholics

11426 Rockville Pike
Rockville, Maryland 20852
(301) 468–0985
Offers materials and information about support groups for children of alcoholics.

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information

P.O. Box 2345
Rockville, Maryland 20852
800–729–6686
Distributes information on alcohol and other drug use prepared by the federal government.

National Council on Alcoholism and Other Drug Dependence

12 West 21st Street
New York, New York 10010
(212) 206–6770
Provides information on alcohol, drug dependency, and local programs for treating and preventing dependence.

National Crime Prevention Council

1700 K Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20006
(202) 466-NCPC (6272)
Provides educational materials featuring "McGruff: The Crime Dog" that are designed to prevent crime and drug use.

Safe and Drug-Free Schools

Washington, DC
1–800–624–0100

Provides information from the U.S. Department of Education on talking with children about alcohol and other drugs.

Office on Smoking and Health
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

4770 Buford Highway, N.E.
M.S. K-50
Atlanta, Georgia 30341–3724
(404) 488–5705
Provides information on the health hazards of cigarettes and smokeless tobacco and on programs to stop smoking.

For Help With Treatment and Referrals

Self-help groups are available in most local communities. These include **Alcoholics Anonymous, Al-Anon, Adult Children of Alcoholics, Cocaine Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Parents Anonymous,** and **Women for Sobriety** among others. Listings of meetings can be obtained from headquarters offices. Their telephone numbers can be found in local directories.

Alcohol and drug abuse treatment programs are often conducted by local hospitals and health centers and can be found in the telephone directory under such listings as "alcohol," "alcoholism," or "drug treatment." Some directories list drug and alcohol agencies in the first section of the white pages.

The **National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors (NASADAD)** keeps a current list of agencies and directors in each state that oversee alcohol and/or drug abuse prevention and treatment activities. The NASADAD telephone number is: (202) 783–6868.

The **National Drug Information and Treatment Referral Hotline** directs drug users and their families to drug treatment facilities in local communities. Their telephone number is 800–662–HELP (4357).

The **National Council on Alcoholism and Other Drug Dependence** offers an information line providing similar services for those who have problems with alcohol and/or drugs. The number is 800-NCA-CALL (622-2255).

Mail-In Coupon

To order your free copy of the U.S. Department of Education's ***Growing Up Drug Free: A Parent's Guide to Prevention***, call (toll free): 1-800-624-0100, or complete the following form and mail it to GROWING UP DRUG FREE, PUEBLO, CO 81009.

Please send me a copy of ***Growing Up Drug-Free: A Parent's Guide to Prevention***

Name ________________________

Street ________________________

City ______________ State ____ Zip Code ____

Building Blocks: Helping Preschoolers Grow Up Alcohol and Drug Free

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- Higher Horizons Day Care Center
  Fairfax, Virginia
- Prince Georges County
  Employees Group Child Care
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Building Blocks: Helping Preschoolers Grow Up Alcohol and Drug Free

Picture Books for Three-Year-Olds

Keisha Ann: That's Who I Am
Who Can Help Me?

Picture Books for Four-Year-Olds

Get Ready ... Here I Go
I'm Such a Big Help!

Picture Books for Five-Year-Olds

Super Duper Timmy Cooper
Denton's Detectives

Guide for Parents

Guide for Caregivers

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

BUILDING BLOCKS

HELPING PRESCHOOLERS GROW UP ALCOHOL AND DRUG FREE

GUIDE FOR CAREGIVERS

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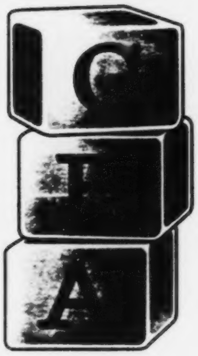
BUILDING BLOCKS

Helping Preschoolers Grow Up Alcohol and Drug Free

GUIDE FOR PARENTS



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Preface

Building Blocks is a series of six picture books for preschoolers designed to help you lay the foundation for alcohol and other drug use prevention among the children in your care.

Most preschoolers, of course, are not exposed to illegal drug use or alcohol abuse, but it is not premature to raise these issues with young children. During early childhood, young children begin developing the self-concepts, habits, and values they will need later on to refuse alcohol and other drugs.

The Building Blocks picture books do not address the topic of alcohol and other drug use directly. Instead, they focus on those behaviors and life skills that help children grow up to be drug free, namely:

- Positive self-concept and self-confidence
- A sense of personal responsibility and responsibility toward others
- Trust in self and trust in others
- The ability to distinguish between fantasy and reality
- The development of the capacities needed to understand cause and effect and to apply that understanding to solving problems.

Each book in the Building Blocks series emphasizes one of these behaviors or traits in a developmentally appropriate context. They also highlight the importance of positive and supportive adult-child relationships. It is through ongoing contact with responsible adults that children learn the life skills they need to remain drug free.

Building Blocks offers an approach to alcohol and other drug use prevention which can be readily incorporated into your normal program routine. As its name implies, Building Blocks capitalizes on the child development techniques and methods you are already using to prepare children to adopt and maintain a drug-free lifestyle.

The program also supports and promotes parental involvement as vital to this process. Building Blocks includes a special Guide for Parents that explains the program and suggests at-home activities to reinforce the messages contained in each story.

In this Guide for Caregivers, we offer some suggestions for using each picture book with the children in your care. In addition, we provide:

- Ideas for involving parents
- Strategies for helping children grow up alcohol and drug free

- Basic information about risk factors for alcohol and other drug use
- A list of resources available for further information about alcohol and other drug use
- A list of other story books to share with the children in your program.

Suggestions for Using Building Blocks Picture Books

The objectives of the Building Blocks series are to help preschool children understand fundamental messages about:

- Self-concept
- Responsibility
- Trust
- The distinction between fantasy and reality
- Problem-solving skills and cause and effect.

ENJOYING STORYTIME

In order to reach these objectives, children must enjoy storytime. As you are well aware, reading to children provides them with information, enriches their vocabulary, and lays the groundwork for their future success as readers. Bringing the child and caregiver together at storytime also can be a rich and rewarding experience for the child. Shared reading promotes the positive adult-child relationships that are characteristic of children who grow up to be alcohol and drug free. By planning ahead, caregivers can ensure that children understand the messages contained in each Building Blocks story and look forward eagerly to group storytime. For example, you should:

- Familiarize yourself with each story ahead of time to become comfortable with it. Determine how long it takes to read aloud and if it makes sense to read the entire book at one sitting.
- Review the information on the developmental characteristics of children in each age group. For your convenience, this information is presented with the "Individual Discussions of Building Blocks Picture Books" in the next section of this guide.
- Read the "Individual Discussions" of each book. They describe the purpose of each story and the steps you can take to make the story interesting for the children. They also show how you can help them understand the story's messages and, through your comments and the activities you pursue with the children, help them incorporate the story's lessons into their own lives.
- Decide when you will read to the children and where. For some caregivers, reading after active play, before rest time, or before departure for home works well. When there are age differences, nap time for younger children often provides a good opportunity to read to older youngsters.

- If you do not already have one, consider establishing a library corner or special reading space. Low shelves, modular plastic squares, and baskets provide accessible spaces for displaying, storing, and returning books. Equip the space with a rug, floor pillows, and child-sized chairs. Include a low chair for yourself. An inviting, comfortable space encourages children to peruse books on their own and to sit as a group during storytime.
- Practice reading dramatically, experimenting with different voices, pacing, and tone to make the story more appealing to the children.
- Plan the kinds of activities you will use to follow up the Building Blocks story and refer to the characters in the books as you begin each project.

INVOLVING PARENTS

Building Blocks recognizes and supports the critical importance of parental involvement in fostering positive behavior. A special reproducible Guide for Parents is included in the Building Blocks program to encourage their active participation. Your copy of the Guide should be shared with parents of the children in your care.

The Guide for Parents:

- Provides an overview of the program
- Summarizes each story
- Describes what preschool alcohol and other drug use prevention is
- Offers suggestions for helping children grow up to be drug free
- Answers questions that parents often ask about alcohol and other drugs
- Gives the names of additional resources for further information.

Preschools, daycare centers, and family daycare homes communicate with parents in a variety of ways. For this reason, the Guide for Parents has been designed for maximum flexibility in disseminating important information. Caregivers can lend the Guide to individual parents, reproduce the entire Guide in sufficient quantities so that each parent receives it as a single document, or pull out various parts of the Guide and distribute them to parents at specified points in the Building Blocks program. For example, the Guide includes a "Dear Parent" letter that introduces the program. Caregivers may decide to extract the letter, copy it, and send it home as a program announcement, or you may opt to use it as a handout at a parent meeting devoted to explaining the Building Blocks program.

The Guide for Parents also includes a list of "Things to do at Home" for each picture book in the series. These listings describe simple activities that parent and child can do together that reinforce the message and social skill illustrated in each book. As each book is read, caregivers may decide to send copies of the activity listing home to encourage parents to follow-up on the story with their children.

The Sources of Information section of the Guide for Parents also can be distributed in a variety of ways. Some caregivers might reserve it for parent meetings or conferences where additional explanations can be given. Others might distribute it as part of a center's regular parent newsletter or post it on a parent information bulletin board.

The Guide certainly will be more useful to parents if they are encouraged to incorporate the suggestions offered into their child-rearing practices. The professional caregiver can assist this process by reinforcing selected program messages with parents on an individual basis. For example:

- In commenting on a child's behavior or progress, try to link your discussion to a Building Blocks theme. "We are working hard with Christopher to help him learn to tie his shoes. Would you please encourage him to practice tying at home? He will not only learn a necessary skill, but he will also gain self-confidence and begin to see that practice pays off."
- In the Building Blocks Guide for Parents, some simple activities related to the individual stories are suggested. If you familiarize yourself with the activities, and then suggest that parents implement them at home, they are much more likely to do so. Whenever possible, try to personalize the children's needs. If a child, for example, needs to work on a specific activity, indicate to the parent that it will enhance the child's problem-solving skills if he or she practices at home.
- Consider offering a Parent Education Evening to discuss techniques parents can use to instill positive self-concept, inspire trust, help children understand the differences between fantasy and reality, and grasp the relationship between cause and effect. Emphasize the importance of developing these qualities as a protection against later involvement with alcohol and other drugs. Often, local child psychologists, clinical social workers, or counselors with expertise in child guidance are willing to participate in such sessions. They are able to share concrete suggestions with parents for fostering social competence in children.

- As part of your parent education program, consider a session devoted to reading at home. A children's librarian may be willing to lead the discussion or provide materials to help you.
- Collect as much information about alcohol and other drug use as you can (see the Sources of Information section for additional information) and if space permits, add a Parents' Section to your library corner. Encourage parents to look at these materials and, depending on availability, to borrow them. Be sure to include a listing of community-based treatment programs and self-help groups.
- Incorporate Building Blocks drug prevention ideas into your individual conversations with parents as frequently as possible. As a respected professional, your comments and suggestions carry a great deal of weight. Parents are far more likely to respond to you than to more impersonal guidance contained in a printed document.

HELPING PRESCHOOLERS GROW UP DRUG FREE

As a group, drug-free children are confident and responsible. They have learned to take care of themselves and to be concerned about their friends and family.

From the time they are very young, children who grow up drug free get along well with other children. They have good relationships with at least one parent, caregiver, or other adult who is important in their lives and, based on that experience, know that adults can be trusted. As a result, drug-free children feel secure. They tend to listen to adults and believe what they say.

Because an adult has shown an interest in them, helped them learn to care for themselves, and praised them for their efforts, drug-free children have developed a sense of competence. They understand that if they work at something, they will learn to do it. As a result, they feel proud, capable, and comfortable within their world of family, school, and neighborhood.

In addition to this positive feeling of self-worth, drug-free children also have other advantages. Most grow up in homes where alcohol is not abused. Even if there are drugs in the neighborhood, the drug-free child's parent or primary caregiver does not use illegal drugs and expresses strong, negative feelings about drug use and the problems it can cause.

Children who are drug free are not all academic achievers, but most accept the necessity for going to school, find something to like about the process (whether in or out of the classroom), and are able to learn. They also find some activity (e.g., sports, music, art, clubs, babysitting) they can do well or that makes them feel special. Supportive adults (parents, teachers or recreation/art instructors) play key roles in drug-free children's success in these pursuits. (For information about the risk factors for using alcohol and other drugs, refer to page 23 of this Guide.)

As caregivers, the most important steps you can take to help children grow up drug and alcohol free are to:

- Encourage them to be responsible and develop skills by identifying tasks preschoolers can do (e.g., feeding themselves, buttoning, zipping), showing them how to do each task, giving them opportunities to practice each new skill until they can do it adequately, and praising them for their efforts.
- Show them adults can be trusted (using yourself as a good example) and point out other trustworthy adults in the community (parent, mail carrier, firefighter, police officer, librarian).
- Encourage them to take age-appropriate responsibility for themselves and others by assigning them tasks (e.g., feeding the goldfish, putting the toys away, clearing the table), holding them accountable for the completion of these tasks, and letting them know what a big help they are.
- Teach them how to solve problems by applying what they know to new situations. Encourage them to think of their own solutions.
- Find something special about each child in your care and comment on this skill, personality trait, or talent as often as possible.
- Lay the foundation for good personal health habits by encouraging children to wash their hands, brush their hair, clean their teeth, and eat wisely. Children who are used to taking care of their bodies are better able to understand that illegal drugs and alcohol can hurt their bodies. Therefore, they are more likely to listen to warnings against their use.
- Emphasize the beauty and pleasure to be found in the natural world. Although young children enjoy make-believe and can learn much from pretending, it is important that they know the difference between fantasy and reality. Drug and alcohol escapes are less appealing to children who feel comfortable in and enjoy their daily environment.
- Tell them what they can do and what they cannot do. Understanding limits is critically important to later alcohol and other drug use prevention. Children who use drugs tend to be impulsive risk-takers who do not recognize boundaries. Remind children of

your rules, the reasons for imposing them, and the consequences for violating them. You will be giving them the framework they will need later to identify risky behavior, understand its impact on self and others, and remove themselves from potentially dangerous situations. Rules about administering medicine and using dangerous household products offer excellent examples for enlarging upon this concept with preschoolers and relating it to drug use.

- Share your ideas with each child's parent(s) so that home and day care or preschool work together to encourage the development of capable, trusting, and happy drug-free children. Also, take a few minutes to review the sections of this guide entitled "Involving Parents," "Risk Factors For Alcohol and Other Drug Use," and "Sources of Information on Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Prevention." That information has been included to help you respond to questions you might be asked by the children's parents and to direct you to sources for further assistance in understanding the problem.

Books for Three-Year-Olds

Three-year-olds respond to actions more readily than to words. They learn by doing and thrive on hearing praise for what they have achieved. The process of learning, practicing, and achieving builds their self-concept and develops their confidence.

Despite their desire to do things for themselves, however, three-year-olds remain firmly attached to the adults in their lives. They rely on them for advice, protection, assistance, and comfort. They depend on parents and caregivers to establish safe boundaries so they understand what they can and cannot do.

These themes are explored in the first two picture books in the Building Blocks series by showing situations three-year-olds will easily recognize. The first book uses rhyme to capture the three-year-olds' attention, capitalizing on their fascination with words and language. The second book holds the interest of the young listeners through the repetition of key phrases and by encouraging them to participate in the story.

KEISHA ANN: THAT'S WHO I AM

Keisha Ann: That's Who I Am, is a rhyming story about a happy three-year-old African-American girl who is excited about the many things she is able to do by herself. Because her parents and grandmother have shown her how to perform tasks appropriate to her age, have encouraged her to take responsibility for herself, and have praised her for the results, Keisha Ann is eager to learn new skills and feels confident that she will be successful in performing them. The idea underlying *Keisha Ann* is that self-concept is linked to competence. Keisha Ann takes pride in her accomplishments and in her capacity to take responsibility for herself in certain key areas (e.g., brushing teeth, caring for clothing). She feels good about herself because she is able to do things for herself. She knows her achievements are important because the major adult role models in her life tell her so. Children who develop this kind of positive self-concept are much less likely to use alcohol and other drugs or engage in negative, risk-taking behavior as they grow older.

Sharing *Keisha Ann: That's Who I Am* With the Children in Your Care

One purpose of the Keisha Ann story is to illustrate to three-year-olds the kinds of things they can do, thus encouraging them to attempt the same skills and gain the same feelings of accomplishment for themselves.

To involve the children in Keisha Ann's story, ask them questions about the characters: "How old do you think Keisha Ann is? Do you know her pet's name? Where do you think Keisha Ann's special place is? Keisha Ann enjoys puzzles; what is your favorite thing to do?" At the end of the story, Keisha Ann asks young listeners to tell her their names and to describe different rooms in their homes. Be sure to allow enough time for the children to respond to these questions.

To help the children understand that they are just like Keisha Ann in many ways, call attention to the similarities: "You can dress yourself just like Keisha Ann! You like working with clay and so does Keisha Ann! You have a pet and Keisha Ann does, too!"

To encourage the children to take responsibility for themselves, ask them questions: "Why do you think Keisha Ann washes her hands and face? When do you wash your hands and face? Do you help set the table at home? Are you big enough to put your toys away like Keisha Ann does?"

Use the story to help the children understand that there are some tasks they can not do by themselves and that it is a good idea to get help from an adult. "Braiding hair is hard, so Keisha Ann's mother does it for her. Does your mother help you with your hair? What other things do your mother or father help you with? Using a stove can be dangerous for children. When Keisha Ann wants to cook, she does it with her Granny. Who do you cook with?"

In addition to using Keisha Ann to talk about behavior, the story can also be used to build cognitive skills. For example, the illustrations in the story can be used to teach children about colors ("What color is Keisha Ann's nightie? Find something green in this picture."); to increase their vocabulary ("What do you call this? Tell me or show me what a tower is."); and to count ("How many people are in this picture?"). Praising children for their involvement in the story enhances their self-concept and shows them that learning does feel good.

Follow-Up Activities

- Ask the children to draw a picture of the people and pets in their family. Encourage them to use their pictures to give the other children a tour of their home and to introduce them to family members.
- Make a "Responsibility Chart" for chores to be done every day, (e.g., helping with snacks, picking up toys, and reshelving books). Put a picture of the child who is "Helper for the Day" next to that chore.
- Have a sharing session based on the activities in Keisha Ann in which each child shows off a skill: "Here's how I set the table for snack time." "Here's how I get into my jacket."

- Demonstrate personal care and hygiene activities for the children so they can do what Keisha Ann does. As the children learn how to do a new skill, add their names to a "Good Health and Habits" chart. When parents and other adults important in the children's lives visit, be sure to point out their achievements. This serves to reinforce the activity and helps ensure that good habits extend to the home.

WHO CAN HELP ME?

Who Can Help Me? is about a worried three-year-old boy who is going off to day care for the first time. As this new stage in his life begins, he needs help in identifying the adults who will help him get home from day care, give him medicine when he is sick, and drive him places in a car.

We know that children who have good relationships with one or more responsible adults are much less likely to succumb to negative peer influences and to use alcohol and other drugs. The purpose of *Who Can Help Me?* is to encourage preschoolers to trust adults and to identify precisely whom the trustworthy adults in a community are. The book also helps young children understand that certain activities, such as taking medicine, are out of bounds for them and should only occur with the help of a trustworthy adult.

Sharing *Who Can Help Me?* With the Children in Your Care

Who Can Help Me? is a participatory question-and-answer book that involves young listeners in the story by asking them to pick out all the special adults who can help the central character, Matthew Manning, called M&M by his family.

When reading *Who Can Help Me?*, call on a different child to respond to each question, or if the group is small enough, all the children can answer each question.

To help the children understand that the story applies to them, change the questions around and ask "Who can take you to day care? Give you medicine? Drive you in a car?" Be sure to relate the children's answers to the rules at your center, preschool, or family day care home.

When you have finished reading the story, have a discussion about the kinds of adults who can help children in a variety of situations. For example, you might ask, "If you get lost in a store, what would you do?" or "If you need help in the library, who would you ask?" Be sure to gently clarify the answer each child gives if it is not correct and then repeat it for the entire group.

Talk to the children about each of the situations in the book so they understand why it is necessary to ask adults to help them. For example, an adult takes you to day care because you must cross a busy street, take the correct bus, or walk across a jammed parking lot where small children may be hard to see. In discussing the medicine portion of the book, be sure to talk about how strong medicines are. "When you have a terrible earache, the medicine you take clears up the infection. But, if you take too much, it can make you feel even sicker than you already are!" or "If you take the wrong medicine, you will not feel any better. You might even feel worse. For this reason, only an adult can give you your medicine."*

Instead of warning children about the dangers of strangers, *Who Can Help Me?* talks about the kinds of adults children can trust. When discussing who can drive children places, you can make the point that they should get into cars, taxicabs or buses only with those people their mother, father, grandmother, or other trusted adult has named. You can also talk to the children about ways of getting needed help if a known and trusted adult is not nearby, such as yelling, finding a police officer, or calling 911.

Just as in *Keisha Ann,* the story *Who Can Help Me?* can be used for skills development. Be sure to use the pictures to teach the children colors, identify common objects, and count; for example, "How many animals can you find in this picture? What kinds of animals are they? What color is the cat?"

Follow-Up Activities

- Ask the children to draw pictures of everyone who can help them and then label each person for them. Write down what each child says about his or her picture. For example, "My daddy takes me to day care on his way to work." You might want to send this artwork home and ask parents to review it with their children.
- During the sharing session, ask each child to talk about the special people who help them.
- Tell the children about the kinds of things you do to help them, (e.g., turn on the oven for cooking, give them materials for projects). Ask them to practice good ways to ask for help: "Please, could you . . . ?" and "Thank you for helping me . . ." Incorporate please and thank you into your daily routine and make sure parents know that you insist on courtesy.

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* In *Who Can Help Me?*, M&M's caregiver is shown dispensing medicine. While it is typical in most areas for caregivers to dispense medication with parental approval, it may vary in your particular state or locality.

- Work with the children to memorize their full names, addresses, and telephone numbers so they can give this information to a helping adult if it is needed. Have them practice in mini-roleplays so they become comfortable with the information and can recall it when they are scared, confused, or upset. If you have the 911 emergency telephone service in your area, talk to the children about it and help them learn how to use it.

Books for Four-Year-Olds

Four-year-olds have great energy. They love to move quickly and ask dozens of questions about everything. Their enthusiasm for new experiences is fueled by their increasing ability to use and enjoy playground equipment, riding toys, scissors, play dough, and simple puzzles and games. Many four-year-olds can socialize happily with other children and have discovered a sense of humor that makes daily life a source of continuing fun.

To ensure that four-year-olds explore their expanding world safely, caregivers and parents need to supervise them carefully. While we delight in their curiosity, we also know that clear limits are needed to restrain their activity and keep their behavior under control.

The two Building Blocks books for four-year-olds capitalize on the children's emerging ability to ask questions and think about solutions as well as perform fairly complicated physical tasks. These qualities illustrate the importance of behaving responsibly toward themselves and others.

GET READY . . . HERE I GO

In this story aimed at four-year-olds, a young Hispanic-American boy enlarges his understanding of personal responsibility to include the concept of planning. The adults in Luis' family have worked with him to master many of the daily tasks necessary for caring for himself. In the story, Luis puts these tasks together in a sequence of five steps so that he has a reasonable plan for getting ready for preschool each day.

Although some steps require Luis to take responsibility only for himself, others involve cooperation with his family and a recognition of their needs. For example, Luis must not only dress himself, but he must do so quietly so he does not disturb his sleeping baby brother.

In *Get Ready . . . Here I Go* the idea of personal responsibility introduced in *Keisha Ann: That's Who I Am*, the first book in the Building Blocks series, becomes more complex. The main character demonstrates that there is more to the concept of "responsibility" than simply "doing the job." Through his efforts to devise a plan, Luis begins to see the relationship between one task and the next. Just as important, he begins to grasp the fact that his actions have an impact on others and they should be considered before putting any plans into effect. At the most fundamental level, both of these realizations depend on Luis' capacity to think about what he is going to do before he does it; to weigh what he does now in light of what occurs next.

As you are well aware, children who become involved with alcohol, drugs, and other risky behavior are often impulsive. Many drug- and alcohol-using adolescents have never developed the habit of thinking first or of considering how their behavior affects someone else. In contrast, children who have learned to defer action long enough to make even the simplest of plans the way Luis does are much better equipped to make appropriate decisions when they are older.

Since they have grown accustomed to accommodating others' needs in their plans from their earliest years, such children also tend to be more comfortable in the family system and, later, in both school and community. This sense of belonging protects them from the feelings of isolation and "outsider" identity that are characteristic of children who grow up to use drugs.

Sharing *Get Ready . . . Here I Go* With the Children in Your Care

To help the children relate to Luis and his family, ask them to describe their own living arrangements. "Who lives with you? Do you share a bedroom? With whom?"

Ask the children how they get ready for preschool (day care). "Who wakes you up? Do you get dressed by yourself? Does someone make breakfast for you? Who? Does everyone in your family eat together or is breakfast shared with one or two special people? Do you get ready the same way every morning?"

Ask the children what they think about Luis' five steps. "Is it a good idea to have a plan? Why? Let's talk about a morning plan. What would you do first? What comes next? Would a plan for getting ready make the morning easier? Why? How do you think Luis felt about his plan?"

Try to introduce the idea of concern or responsibility for others by pointing out the instances in the story where Luis was considerate. For example, he dressed himself so his mother had time to get ready; he was quiet in the bedroom so the baby could sleep; he helped clear the table so Papá Grande or Tia Lucia did not have to do all the work. Explore with the children the various ways they can be considerate at home in the morning. Depending on their interest, expand on this concept to include day care or preschool.

In *Get Ready . . . Here I Go*, Luis calls his grandfather Papá Grande, Luis's expression for his grandfather. The Spanish word, *abuelo,* means grandfather for most children. He also calls his Aunt Lucia, Tia Lucia. *Tia* is the Spanish word for aunt.

Explain to the children that many people who live in the United States have come from other countries where different languages are spoken. Ask the children what they call their grandparents, aunts, uncles and other relatives and talk about the importance of respecting these various traditions.

Follow-Up Activities .

- Using pictures from magazines or drawings produced by the children, work with them to construct a personal step map of each task that must be done in order to "get ready and go." Number each step. You might also want to make big steps numbered 1 through 5 that can be placed and taped on the floor. Children can take turns moving from step to step, announcing and acting out each activity for getting ready in the morning.
- Write down all the special names that the children use when addressing their parents and other relatives and try to determine the language from which the words are drawn.
- Have the children bring in photos of each family member. Label each picture with the English word as well as the equivalent in whatever languages are represented by the children in your care. If you are unsure of the language or spelling, ask the children's parents for help.
- Apply the step method to other preschool (day care) activities. Prior to going on a field trip, for example, ask the children to think about the steps they must take to get ready. If others are involved, talk about the cooperation needed so that everyone is treated fairly. For example, permission slips let parents know "what we are doing and the time we'll be back so they won't worry; we lower our voices in the firehouse so we can hear the fire chief and don't disturb the firefighters."
- Talk to the children about people who make plans as part of their jobs. You might want to talk about the child care program's daily schedule. You also could discuss a doctor's appointment book or, depending on the children's interest, talk about what a city or highway planner or architect does. Ask the children if their mothers or fathers do any planning. Mention that many parents keep calendars marked with all the things that family members have to do so plans can be made and followed. Make sure you show the children a calendar so they can understand what you are talking about.

I'M SUCH A BIG HELP!

Jennifer Han, the four-year old main character in *I'm Such A Big Help!* is an enthusiastic Asian-American girl who is trying very hard to be helpful to others but, in some cases, has not quite mastered the skills. Those whom she is helping praise her for her efforts and gently suggest ways to do things better the next time.

The theme of *I'm Such A Big Help!* is that it takes time and practice to become developmentally competent. Caring adults are shown as essential to this process; they provide both the supportive environment in which positive risks can be taken safely and the encouragement needed to persist in learning, even when setbacks and frustration occur.

I'm Such A Big Help! uses situations with which young children can identify to illustrate an important point: even though an outcome may not be perfect, a person can and should both enjoy and persist in the process of trying. This concept is especially important for young children to begin to absorb.

In order to obtain pleasure from school, sports, hobbies, and other activities, children's skills have to be strong enough so they can fully participate. Their skills do not have to be exceptional, but they do have to be adequate. Children who have not developed the patience they need to continue with a task or pursuit until they have mastered it, usually will not become involved in such activities. As a result, they frequently see themselves as inept and worthless. For these youngsters, alcohol and other drugs have a special appeal. They provide an opportunity to belong to a group and to obtain the good feelings more resilient and competent children obtain from their accomplishments.

I'm Such A Big Help! also reinforces the idea of responsibility toward others that was introduced in *Get Ready . . . Here I Go*. Jennifer genuinely tries to assist members of her family and her neighbors. Regardless of outcome, her efforts serve to connect her to her family and neighborhood, help her forge relationships with adults, and expand her self-centered view of the world to include an interest in and concern for others.

As you know, children who contribute to family life by cooperating in everyday tasks feel important and worthwhile. As they grow older, it is only natural for them to extend their desire to help outward to the larger community. Positive interactions with other adults reinforce their feeling that they are both needed and valued. In contrast, children who become involved with drugs, alcohol, and other negative behavior, often lack feelings of responsibility towards others. Many of these youngsters never learned to play an effective role in family life and consequently do not feel that they have any role to play in the world around them.

Sharing *I'm Such a Big Help!* With the Children in Your Care

As you read each "helping event" to the children, let them study the accompanying illustration. Then ask them what Jennifer is doing and to discuss what they see. Acknowledge that no one does everything right the first time he or she tries. Ask the children to share examples of times when they had to really work at something to learn how to do it. Try to get them to think about how they felt ("First, I was unhappy that I could not do it, then I felt good when it worked out.") and who helped them. Point out that even though Jennifer sometimes makes mistakes, she learns something every time. For example:

- The next time Jennifer pours the juice, she will use a smaller pitcher that will be easier for her to handle.
- When she makes her bed, she will make sure the pillow is at the head of the bed.
- When she dresses her baby sister again, she will put only one leg at a time in the overall pants.
- When she helps sort the laundry, she will match up the right socks.
- When she helps clear the table, she will carry only a few things at a time.
- When she thinks the cat should be groomed, she will not use a hairbrush, but will use a special pet grooming brush that does not hurt the cat.

Using other pictures in the story, ask the children to describe what Jennifer is doing to help. Ask the children if they do any of the same chores Jennifer does.

Use the story to initiate a discussion about helping others. You might note, for example, that by dressing the baby, Jennifer not only saved her mother a lot of work, but also got to know her baby sister better. Follow up by asking how many children have baby brothers, sisters, or pets, then prompt the children to talk about their own experiences in helping others and why it is an important thing to do. Help them to think up additional ways they could assist family members, friends, or the other children at day care.

Follow-Up Activities

- Have each child make a "Family Helpers Album" that shows all their family members, including the child (you can label the pictures for them), and the things they do to help each other (e.g., Mommy cooks for all of us, big brother collects and empties the trash). Albums can then be shared with the other children and proudly brought home for the family.
- Ask the children to complete a "Home Helpers Pledge" that describes new activities they will learn and complete to help someone at home. Share the pledge with the child's parents and ask them to display it at home as a reminder of the new chore.
- Give each child an opportunity to be your special helper for a particular task. Instruct them in the task and have them wear a special badge for the day (week) when it is their turn to help. At the conclusion of the helping period, thank the special helpers

for their assistance, talk about what their helping meant to you and the day care (preschool) group, and share their achievements with their parents.

- When introducing a new activity (for example, assembling snacks, making holiday decorations, picking and arranging flowers), be sure to praise the children for their efforts during the process ("Tiffany is working carefully with her paints; Josh is coloring his valentines in bright red; Lee is helping Maria with the paste.") as well as for the results ("Thanks to your hard work, we have tasty snacks today!" or ". . . a festive room for the holiday!").

Books for Five-Year-Olds

Talkative, practical five-year-olds thrive on routine and structure. Being "good" is a virtue for most fives. They are content with things as they are and, in contrast to four-year-olds, are relatively undemanding as a result.

By the age of five, most children have good control of their bodies. They can sit still in a chair, fasten and unfasten buttons, and color within the lines. These new physical skills are matched by their increased capacity to reason and understand the world around them. Five-year-olds are just beginning to understand cause and effect. They know, for example, that if they turn the faucet on, water will come out. Through everyday activities, they are learning that their actions have consequences.

The two Building Blocks books for five-year-olds focus on this new understanding of cause and effect as their major theme. In *Super Duper Timmy Cooper*, the young hero must come to grips with cause and effect in the "real world." In *Denton's Detectives*, the children apply their ability to understand why things happen to solve a series of problems.

SUPER DUPER TIMMY COOPER

Although the line between fantasy and reality is blurry for most young children, the capacity to distinguish between the two normally begins to develop during the preschool years. *Super Duper Timmy Cooper* is designed to help young children with this process.

In this story, five-year-old Timmy Cooper believes that super powers helped him master a skill on the jungle gym. He then tries to give his dog, Duke, super powers so that Duke can perform tricks for him. When the super cape and magic words do not produce the desired results, Timmy learns that super powers do not work in the real world. He also learns that there is no substitute for sustained effort in producing results.

Although children generally like to indulge in fantasy from time to time, as they mature there should be a growing recognition that what they are seeing, hearing, or doing is not real.

Some youngsters, however, grow up without developing the capacity to clearly discriminate between what is real and what is not. Even during the middle-school years, they are still prone to what child psychologists call "magical thinking." Since they are confused about what makes things happen, they are much more susceptible to claims that special potions, pills, and rituals can solve problems or produce effects without any corresponding effort on their part. These children often have great difficulty seeing through the false promises of chemical well-being offered by alcohol and other drugs.

In contrast, children who understand the difference between fantasy and reality are more skeptical about so-called magical properties and, as a result, are far less likely to become drug-involved.

Another theme underlying *Super Duper Timmy Cooper* concerns judgement and independent action. Although not explicitly stated, Timmy tries to give Duke super powers without his parents' knowledge. If he had consulted his mom or dad, a different and more effective strategy for training his dog would have been used. The story, then, also is reminding preschool-aged listeners to talk with an adult before undertaking a plan because adults know more and can help children decide what to do and what not to do.

Youngsters who are harmfully involved with alcohol and other drugs often live in homes where communications between parent and child have broken down, adult authority is not recognized and respected, and impulsive behavior is accepted as normal. All the Building Blocks books emphasize the flip side of such relationships, showing the value of communication between children and responsible adults and the need for and importance of adult authority.

Sharing *Super Duper Timmy Cooper* With the Children in Your Care

You might begin your discussion about *Super Duper Timmy Cooper* by asking the children if they know any super heroes. "Where have you seen them? On TV? In comics or video games? Do you think super heroes are real people like your Mom or Dad or me? Do you like to play super heroes?"

Emphasize the children's similarities with Timmy: "Most of you are about the same age as Timmy. Do any of you have a dog? Do you like to go to the playground? Can you do flips on the jungle gym like Timmy?"

Use the events in the story to make a point. For example, reinforce the message that "Super heroes are fun, but they are just pretend." Try to foster a discussion about the traits that make a real hero: a firefighter trains hard to save lives, thinks through a plan of attack, shares the plan with the other firefighters, and works with them to carry it out. Remind the children that, "Learning a skill or training a dog involves a lot of work and patience. If you want to do something well, you have to practice. And if you want your dog to learn tricks, you must continue the training even when you are tired or would rather play."

Ask open-ended questions based on the story's theme. "If you wanted to teach your dog a trick, what would you do? If you wanted to have a great day in school, how would you go about it?"

Follow-Up Activities

- Talk to the children about the shows they watch on television. For example, "On Sesame Street, is Oscar the Grouch or Big Bird real? What about Maria? How about cartoon characters? Are they real? How can you tell?"
- Talk very directly to the children about what is real and what is pretend. Walk around the play area. Ask the children to point out what is real and what is not (e.g., the plastic fish is pretend, the fish swimming in the fishbowl is real), and then talk about the differences between the real and the pretend item.
- Ask the children to share stories about their pets, if they have them. Tell them to draw a picture that shows everything they do to take care of their pets.
- Read several stories to the children that feature real and fantasy animals. Ask the children to comment on the differences between the real and fantasy characters. For example, the fantasy animals talk like people do, ride bicycles, wear clothes, go to school; real animals bark, meow, eat animal food not people food, and so on.
- Talk to the children about what they should do before beginning a project. Make a game of it. You might ask, "What do you do when you want to go out to the park?" (Possible answer, "I ask Mommy, then I get my jacket on and find my ball.") Or, you might say, "What do you do when you want to paint?" (Possible answer, "I ask my teacher, then I get my smock on and set up the paints.") Throughout the discussion, emphasize that getting approval for the activity or having a discussion with the adult in charge is always the first step.

DENTON'S DETECTIVES

The concluding book in the Building Blocks series has been specifically designed to lay the groundwork for developing preliminary problem-solving skills.

In *Denton's Detectives*, the children in the family day care home think about what they are going to do before they do it. They study a problem, then take action based on their observations. Although their understanding of the scientific method is elementary, the detectives have grasped the relationship between cause and effect.

Using a vegetable garden as an example, *Denton's Detectives* demonstrates that learning about a subject and taking certain steps will lead to fairly predictable consequences. In this story, the children learn that what they do to their garden (the cause) determines how the carrots turn out (the effect).

Understanding the connection between cause and effect plays a special and important role in preventing alcohol and other drug use. Children who are able to think about what drugs, alcohol, and tobacco could do to them (e.g., make them sick; get them into trouble with parents or the police; give them bad breath or stained teeth), are better able to refuse drugs when the offer is made. Such children have the skills they need to consider a problem or situation critically. They are then able to envision the effect a particular action could have on them and behave accordingly. Children who learn to think first are much less likely to take dangerous risks.

Children who grow up drug free usually have developed the capacity to look at the facts about alcohol and other drugs and use this information to control their behavior. In much the same way, under the guidance of Mrs. Denton, the family day care provider, the children gather information prior to planting their carrot garden, observe what happens, and proceed accordingly. They make decisions to continue what is effective and abandon what is not.

A second theme in *Denton's Detectives* concerns cooperative learning. The children work together to solve problems and take pride in their group identity. One characteristic of drug-involved children is their failure to "fit in" with a positive peer group. "Druggie" groups, like gangs, give alienated youngsters a needed sense of identity. When young children participate in appropriate group activities, they have innumerable opportunities for positive interaction. As a result, they are less likely to be attracted to groups involved in risky or unhealthy behavior.

Sharing *Denton's Detectives* With the Children in Your Care

To involve the children in the story, ask them whether they have gardens at home or have visited someone who has a garden. "Children, do you help with the garden? What do you do? If you do not weed, water, or harvest the crops, what will happen?"

Use the events in the story to make a point. "Before the children planted the carrot seeds, they learned about them first. That way, they knew what to do to make the carrots grow. When the children grew more carrots than they could eat, they made a plan to use the extra carrots. We should make a plan to use our leftovers wisely, too."

To help children begin to think critically, ask open-ended questions which require thought but have concrete responses. For example, "If you wanted to have a garden at home or we wanted to start one here, where would you put it? Why? What would you grow? What tools or equipment would you need to take care of it?"

Ask the children why the children in the family day care home were thought of as detectives. "What kinds of problems did they solve? Can we solve problems like they do? What would we have to do?"

Follow-Up Activities

- Start a gardening project, using the steps in *Denton's Detectives* as a model. The children should follow the process, from the original idea to implementation. Assign special "gardeners" for particular jobs (e.g., watering, weeding) on certain days. Talk about the garden's progress and point out how the right amount of light, the proper soil, and nutrients help the garden grow. Give the children "Green Thumb Awards" when the plants bloom.
- Help the children make a "Gardener's Album" to record everything that happens in the garden. If possible, take photos of the plot before the plants begin to sprout, during their growing period, and after the sprouts begin to show. Note any problems/observations (e.g., the plot became crowded) and solutions (e.g., thinning the plants and transferring the surplus to a second plot).
- Ask each child to think about and then draw a picture of the kind of garden he or she would like to have. Remind the children that many people have flowers as well as vegetables in their gardens. Have each child talk about his/her garden during sharing time. When all the children have described their gardens, ask them what they would do if they grew more flowers and vegetables than they could use. For example, give vegetables to a neighbor or the local food kitchen, bring flowers to an older relative or a special friend in a nursing home.
- When a "mystery" arises during the day, call for a halt in the day's activity. Explain the problem and ask for a volunteer "detective" to solve it. Help the problem solver think through and apply the steps necessary to make his or her solution work. Once the problem is resolved, thank the detective for helping and add his or her name to the "Detective Problem Solvers Honor Roll." Share the children's successes with their parents and ask them to continue this approach to problem solving at home.

As a skilled caregiver, you have an in-depth knowledge of the kinds of reinforcing activities that are most effective with the children in your care. Please feel free to adapt the activities suggested above or to substitute others that, in your professional opinion, will help young children develop the skills and characteristics described in the Building Blocks picture books.

Sharing Building Blocks With Parents

Since parents turn to you for guidance about their children's behavior and development, you might want to consider sharing your thoughts about the Building Blocks program and the larger issue of preschool alcohol and other drug abuse prevention at a special parent meeting or individual conferences. Depending upon how your program is organized, you also might opt to establish a lending library for parents that includes the Building Blocks picture books and Guide for Parents as well as other materials focusing on early childhood development. As you know so well, a positive partnership between parents and caregivers contributes substantially to children's well-being. By involving parents in the Building Blocks process, you will both extend the impact of the program on the children and assist parents in their efforts to provide appropriate modeling and direction.

RISK FACTORS FOR ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG USE

In the discussions of the individual Building Blocks picture books, links have been made between the development of specific characteristics/skills and the prevention of alcohol and other drug use. These links are based on comprehensive research. *

Following are brief excerpts from those research findings. They are included in this Guide to reinforce the importance of beginning the process of developing social competence during the preschool years. The information may also assist you in responding to parents' questions about the rationale and need for the Building Blocks program.

Risk factors are personal and environmental characteristics which are associated with a heightened possibility of developing a problem. While the absence of risk factors does not guarantee that a particular child will not use alcohol or other drugs, the presence of one or more risk factors does suggest that there is an increased possibility that alcohol- or other drug-related problems may occur.

Reducing risk factors is a very important goal of drug prevention. And, as with virtually every condition linked to behavior, the earlier the risk factors are identified and addressed, the less likely it is that an alcohol or other drug use problem will develop.

Risk factors for alcohol and other drug use can be divided into the following three general categories: family factors; peer factors; and achievement, social, and developmental factors. A more complete description of each category follows.

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* The characteristics/skills described in the discussions of the individual picture books are based on research conducted by J. David Hawkins, Ph.D., Karol L. Kumpfer, Ph.D., and Denise B. Kandel, Ph.D., and others, on the risk factors associated with alcohol and other drug use during adolescence.

Family Factors

1. Children whose parents or other siblings are alcoholics or other drug users are at greater risk of developing an alcohol or other drug problem than those without such a history. Genetic factors play a significant role in determining this. There is evidence that children born of an alcoholic parent, even when raised by non-alcoholic foster parents, have much higher rates of alcoholism that those with non-alcoholic origins.
2. Children with a family history of criminality or antisocial behavior are more likely to use alcohol and other drugs than those without such a history.
3. Children of parents who are inconsistent with direction and/or discipline are at greater risk for using alcohol and other drugs than are children whose parents are consistent. This parental inconsistency is exemplified by:
    - Unclear/inconsistent parental rules and reactions to children's behavior
    - Unusual permissiveness
    - Lax supervision
    - Excessively severe discipline
    - Constant criticism
    - An absence of parental praise or approval
4. Parental drug use or parental attitudes approving drug use appear to predispose children to use. Since parents serve as models for their children's behavior in so many ways, it is not surprising that children whose parents smoke, drink heavily, or use illegal drugs are more likely to do so than children whose parents do not.

Peer Factors

Children whose friends smoke, drink, or use other drugs are much more likely to do so than those whose peers do not. Contrary to popular myth, initiation into these activities is usually through friends. The local drug pusher is far more likely to be a child's acquaintance who wants to share the drug experience, or who "deals" as a way of supporting his or her own drug use, than some mysterious stranger lurking near the school.

Achievement, Social, and Developmental Factors

1. Children who are poor academic achievers are more likely to begin using drugs early and to become regular smokers, drinkers and drug users than are their more successful classmates.

2. Adolescents who are bored by schoolwork and disinterested in academic achievement are much more likely to become drug involved than those who are more academically oriented.
3. Children who rebel against adult authority and feel alienated from the dominant social values of their community are more likely to use alcohol and other drugs than those with strong bonds to family and traditional religious or ethical institutions.
4. Early antisocial behavior, evidence of a lack of social responsibility, fighting, and other types of aggressive behavior are predictive of later alcohol and other drug use.
5. The earlier a child begins to smoke, drink, or use other drugs, the greater the likelihood of heavy drug use later. Although there are occasional exceptions, there is usually an orderly progression in drug use, beginning with tobacco and alcohol, the so-called "gateway drugs." Youngsters who smoke or drink are more likely to use marijuana than those who avoid tobacco and alcohol.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG ABUSE PREVENTION

In addition to local libraries, the following are good sources of information and other assistance on alcohol and other drug abuse prevention.

Alcoholics Anonymous General Service Office

P.O. Box 459
Grand Central Station
New York, New York 10163
(212) 870–3400

Self-help recovery organization for alcohol abusers of all ages. Check your telephone directory for local meetings.

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters

P.O. Box 862, Midtown Station
New York, New York 10018
(800) 356–9996

Provides assistance and information to families of alcohol abusers. Check your telephone directory for local listings.

American Council for Drug Education

136 E. 64th St.
New York, New York 10021
(212) 758-8060

Provides pamphlets, fact sheets and videos on drugs and alcohol. Call for a free catalog.

American Lung Association

1740 Broadway
New York, New York 10019
(212) 315–8700

Provides materials on the dangers of smoking. Check your telephone directory for listing of local affiliates.

Children of Alcoholics Foundation, Inc.

200 Park Avenue, 31st Floor
New York, New York 10166
(212) 351–2680

Provides general information and an excellent guide to resources available for children of alcoholics.

Families in Action

2296 Henderson Mill Road, Suite 300
Atlanta, Georgia 30345
(404) 934–6364

Offers materials to families coping with or attempting to prevent alcohol and other drug abuse. Also, publishes the "Drug Abuse Update" newsletter which summarizes alcohol and other drug information published in scientific journals and the popular press.

National Association for Children of Alcoholics

11426 Rockville Pike
Rockville, Maryland 20852
(301) 468–0985

Offers materials and information about support groups for children of alcoholics.

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information

P.O. Box 2345
Rockville, Maryland 20852
800–729–6686

Distributes information on alcohol and other drug use prepared by the federal government.

National Council on Alcoholism and Other Drug Dependence

12 West 21st Street
New York, New York 10010
(212) 206–6770

Provides information on alcohol problems and drug dependency, as well as information about local programs for treating and preventing dependence.

National Crime Prevention Council

1700 K Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20006
(202) 466–NCPC (6272)

Provides brochures, activity books, and other materials featuring "McGruff: The Crime Dog" for parents and children which are designed to prevent crime and drug use.

Safe and Drug-Free Schools

Washington, DC
1–800–624–0100

Provides information from the U.S. Department of Education on talking with children about alcohol and other drugs.

Office on Smoking and Health Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

4770 Buford Highway, N.E.

M.S. K–50

Atlanta, Georgia 30341–3724

(404) 488–5705

Provides information on the health hazards of tobacco cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, and programs to stop smoking.

For Help With Treatment and Referrals

Self-help groups are available in most local communities. These include **Alcoholics Anonymous, Al-Anon, Adult Children of Alcoholics, Cocaine Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Parents Anonymous,** and **Women for Sobriety.** Listings of meetings can be obtained from headquarters offices with telephone numbers in local directories.

Contact alcohol and drug abuse treatment programs in local hospitals and health centers, listed in the telephone directory under "alcohol," "alcoholism," "drug treatment," and similar headings. Some directories list human services agencies in the front section of the white pages.

The **National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors (NASADAD)** keeps a current list of agencies and directors in each state that oversee alcohol and/or drug abuse prevention and treatment activities. The NASADAD telephone number is: (202) 783–6868.

The **National Drug Information and Treatment Referral Hotline** directs drug users and their families to drug treatment facilities in local communities. Their telephone number is 800–662–HELP (4357).

The **National Council on Alcoholism and Other Drug Dependence** offers an information line providing similar services for those who have problems with alcohol and/or drugs. The number is 800–NCA–CALL (622–2255).

Mail-In Coupon

To order your free copy of the U.S. Department of Education's ***Growing Up Drug Free: A Parent's Guide to Prevention,*** call (toll free): 800–624–0100, or complete this form and mail it to GROWING UP DRUG FREE, PUEBLO, CO 81009.

Please send me a copy of ***Growing Up Drug-Free: A Parent's Guide to Prevention***

Name ______________________________

Street ______________________________

City ____________________ State ____ Zip Code _____

Selected Read-Aloud Book List for Preschoolers

Following is a brief listing of books that you might wish to share with the children in your program. The children's librarian at your local library can suggest dozens of other books that preschoolers like.

Abuela by Arthur Dorras

Bedtime For Frances by Russell Hoban (and other books in the Frances series)

Benjie by Joan Lexau

The Carrot Seed by Ruth Krauss

Con Mi Hermano/With My Brother by Eileen Roe

Corduroy by Don Freeman

The Country Bunny And The Little Gold Shoes by DuBose Heyward

Do You Love Me? by Dick Gackenbach

Emmett's Pig by Mary Stolz

Everett Anderson by Lucille Clifton (also, *The Boy Who Didn't Believe In Spring*)

Frog And Toad Are Friends by Arnold Lobel

Goodnight Moon by Margaret Wise Brown

Henry The Explorer by Mark Taylor

How My Family Lives In America by Susan Kuklin

The Island Of The Skog by Steven Kellogg

Ira Sleeps Over by Bernard Waber

Katy And The Big Snow by Virginia Lee Burton

Lentil by Robert McCloskey

Little Bear by Else Holmelund Minarik

The Little Engine That Could by Watty Piper

Little Toot by Hardie Gramatky

Michael by Liesel M. Skorpen

Mike Mulligan And The Steam Shovel by Virginia Lee Burton

No Fighting, No Biting! by Tomie de Paola

Peter's Chair by Ezra Jack Keats (also, *Whistle for Willie*)

The Poky Little Puppy by Janette S. Lowrey

Titch by Pat Hutchins

Umbrella by Taro Yashima

The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle

Where's Spot? by Eric Hill

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*U.S. G.P.O.:1995-384-709

Building Blocks: Helping Preschoolers Grow Up Alcohol and Drug Free

Picture Books for Three-Year-Olds

Keisha Ann: That's Who I Am
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Get Ready … Here I Go
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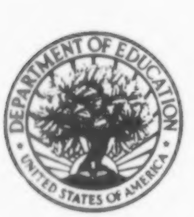
Picture Books for Five-Year-Olds

Super Duper Timmy Cooper
Denton's Detectives

Guide for Parents

Guide for Caregivers


DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Denton's Detectives

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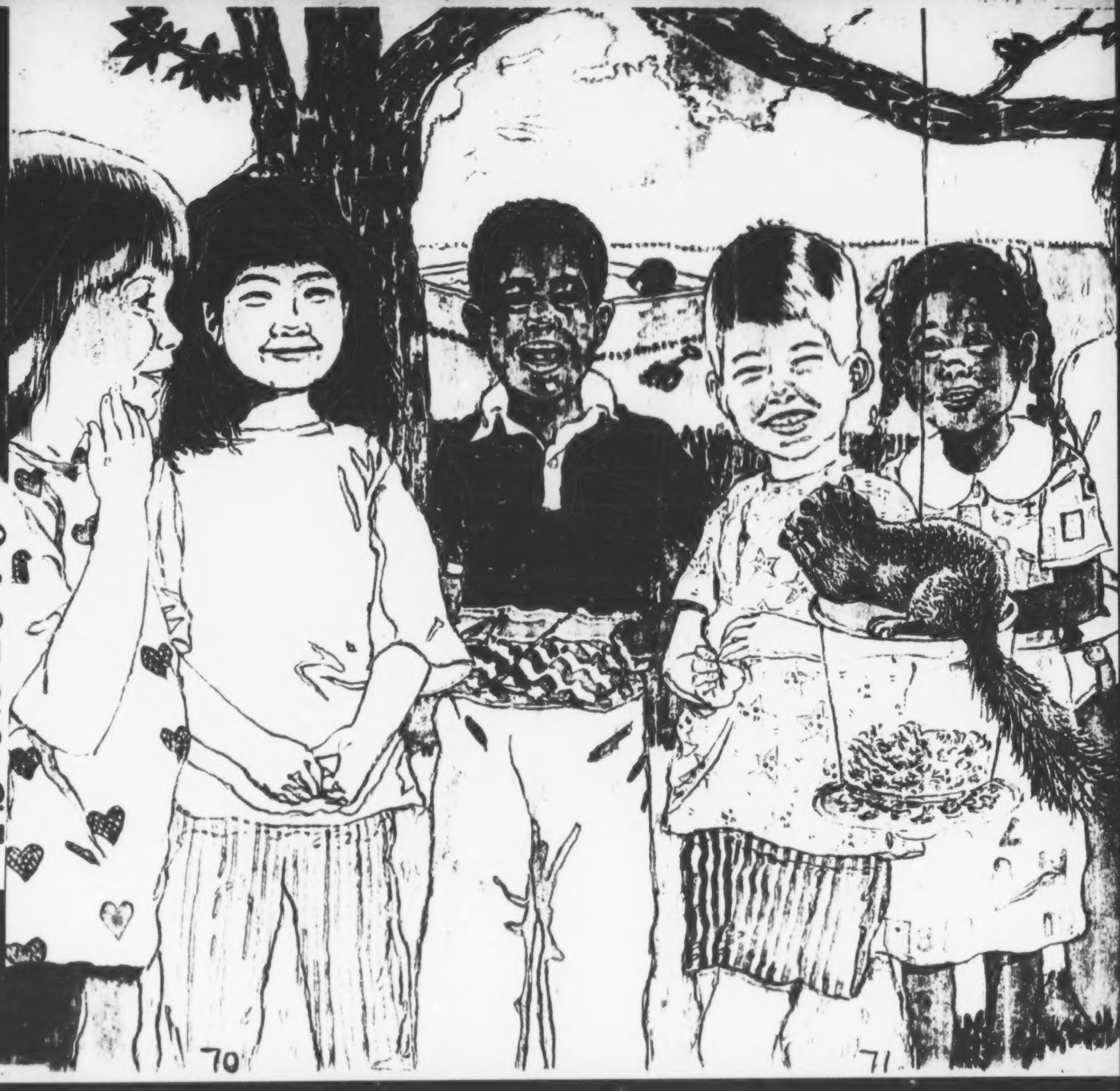
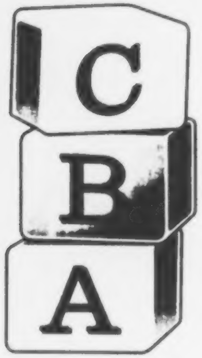


Denton's Detectives

A Building Blocks Picture Book for Five-Year-Olds



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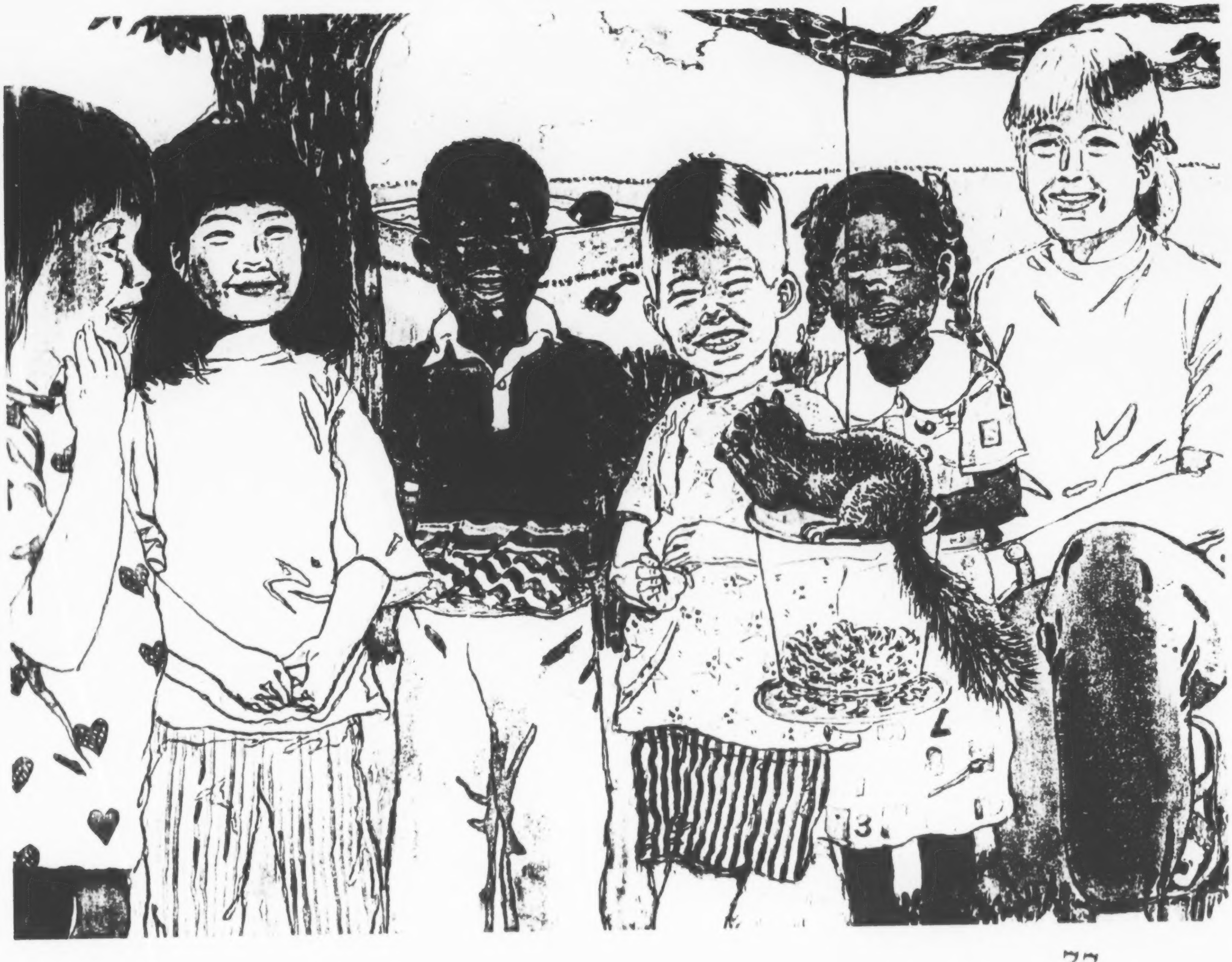
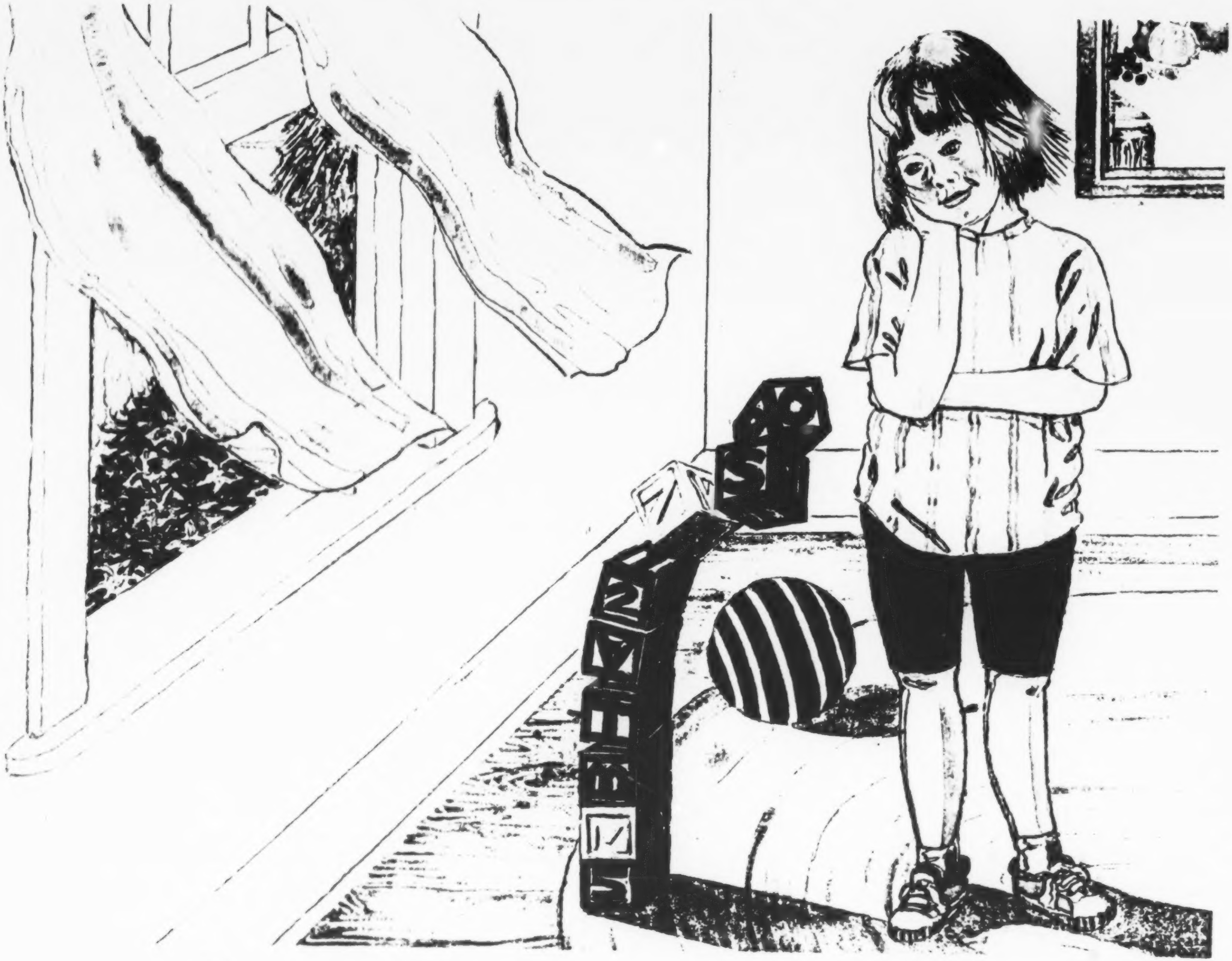
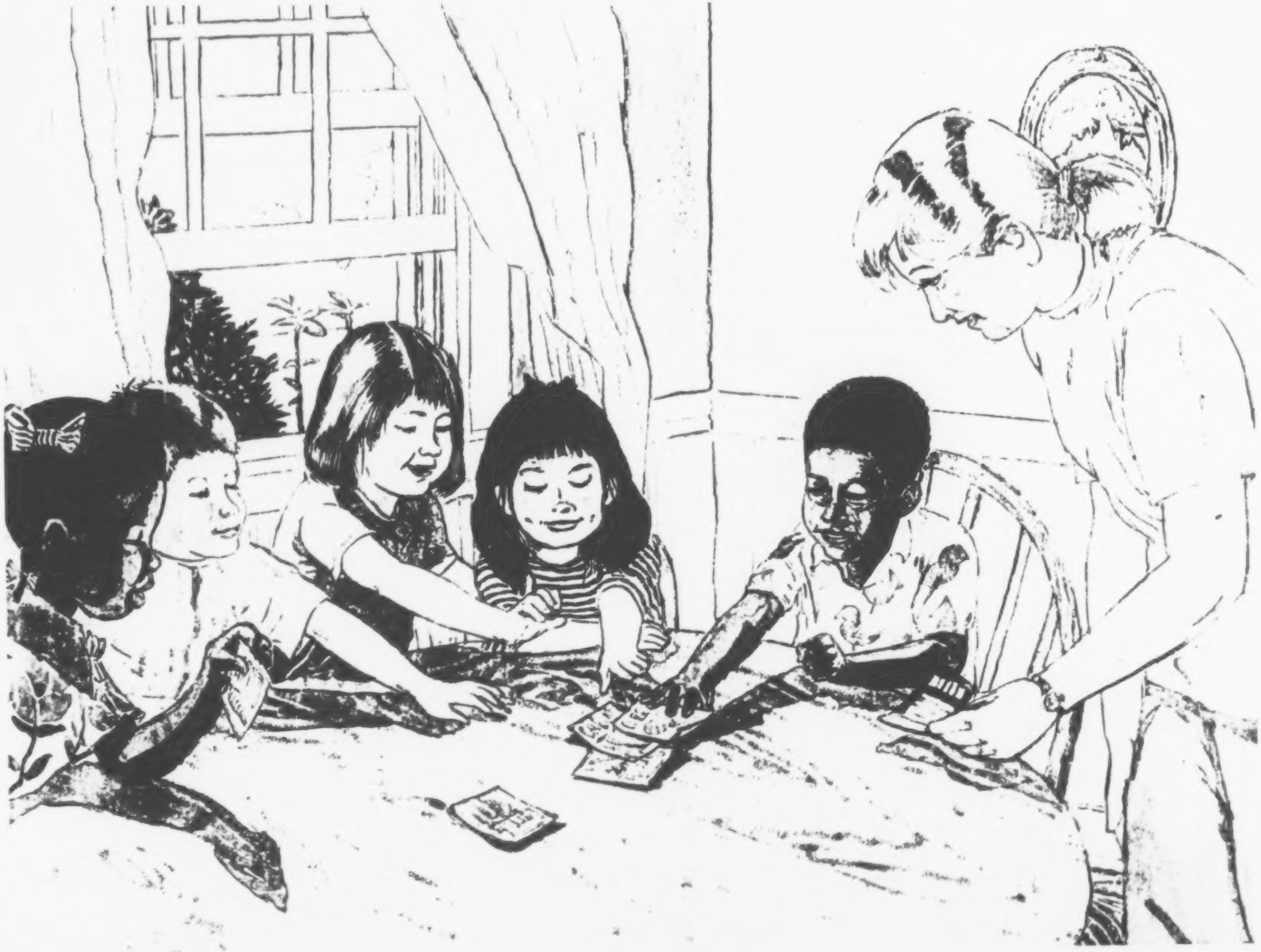
*M*rs. Denton calls the children in her family day care home the best problem solvers in Springfield. Dawne, David, Shantay, Vic and Elizabeth can solve anything.



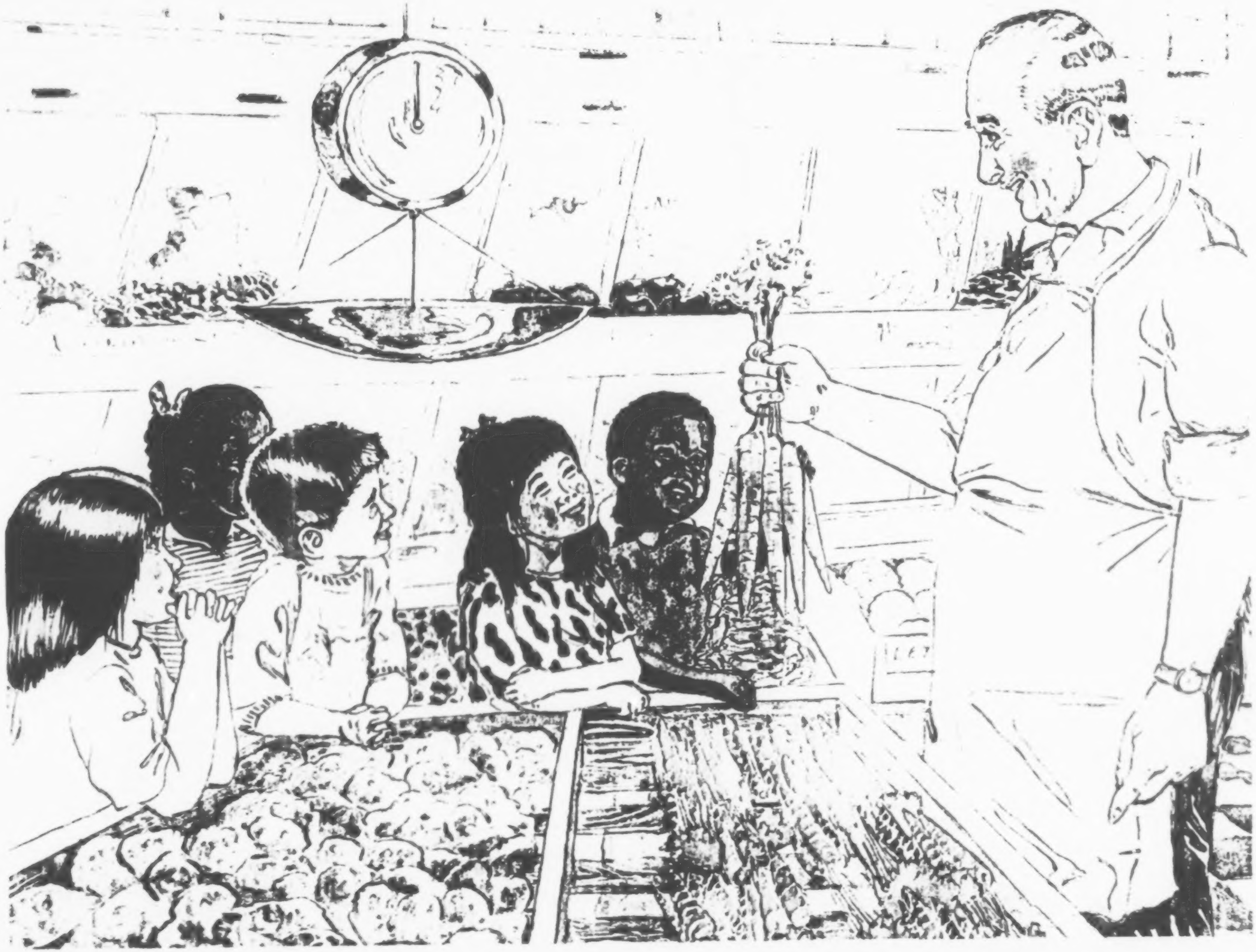
When the bird feeders emptied all at once,
the children discovered the squirrels were eating the seeds.
When Mrs. Denton lost an earring, it was the children's idea to
search the sandbox. When the wind blew over their block tower,
the children figured out that a storm was coming.
Now, they call themselves Denton's Detectives.



One day, Mrs. Denton told the children about a new project.
"We all love carrots for snacktime," she said as she gave the children
packets of carrot seeds. "Let's grow our own."
The children thought that was a great idea.
"But how will we know what to do?" asked Dawne.
"We've never grown carrots before."



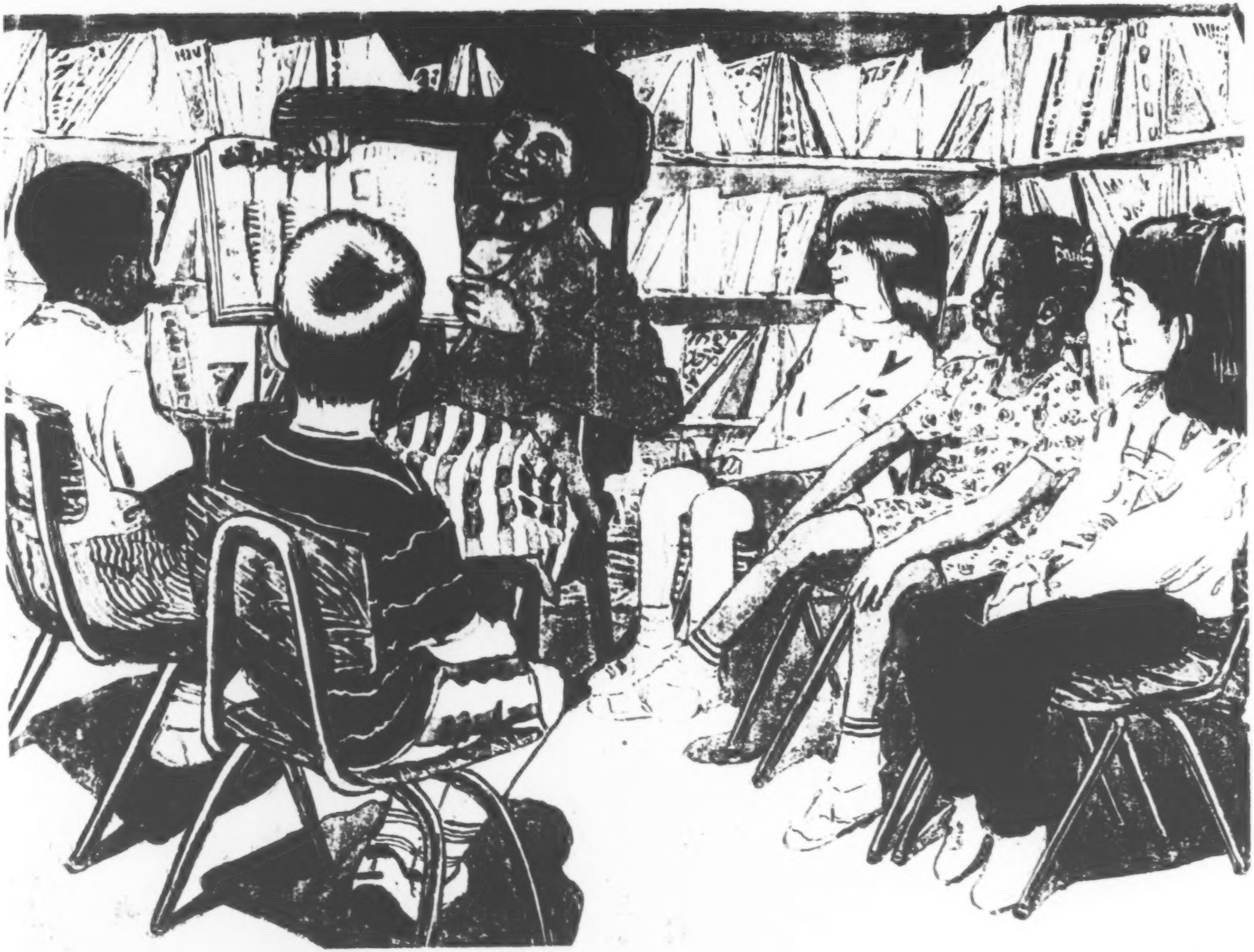
David had an idea. "Let's go to the grocery store," he said.
"I bet Mr. O'Brien, the vegetable man, can help us."
But Mr. O'Brien couldn't help.
"I know how to choose tasty carrots for my customers to eat,"
he said, "but I don't know anything about growing them."



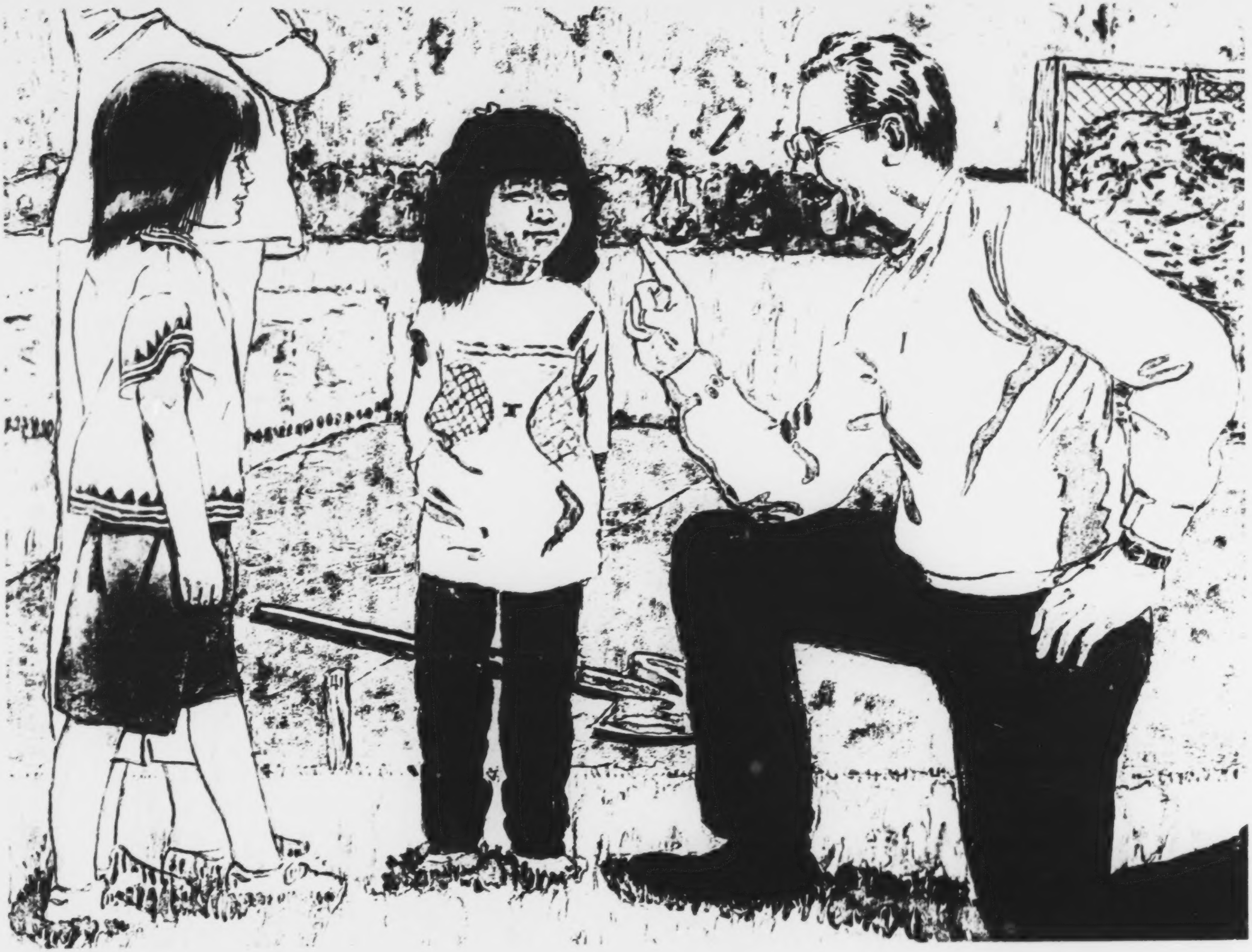
*T*hen Elizabeth had an idea. "Maybe a book is what we need," she said. "Let's ask Mrs. Cushing, the librarian."

Mrs. Cushing found a book about vegetables, but it didn't show how to grow carrots.

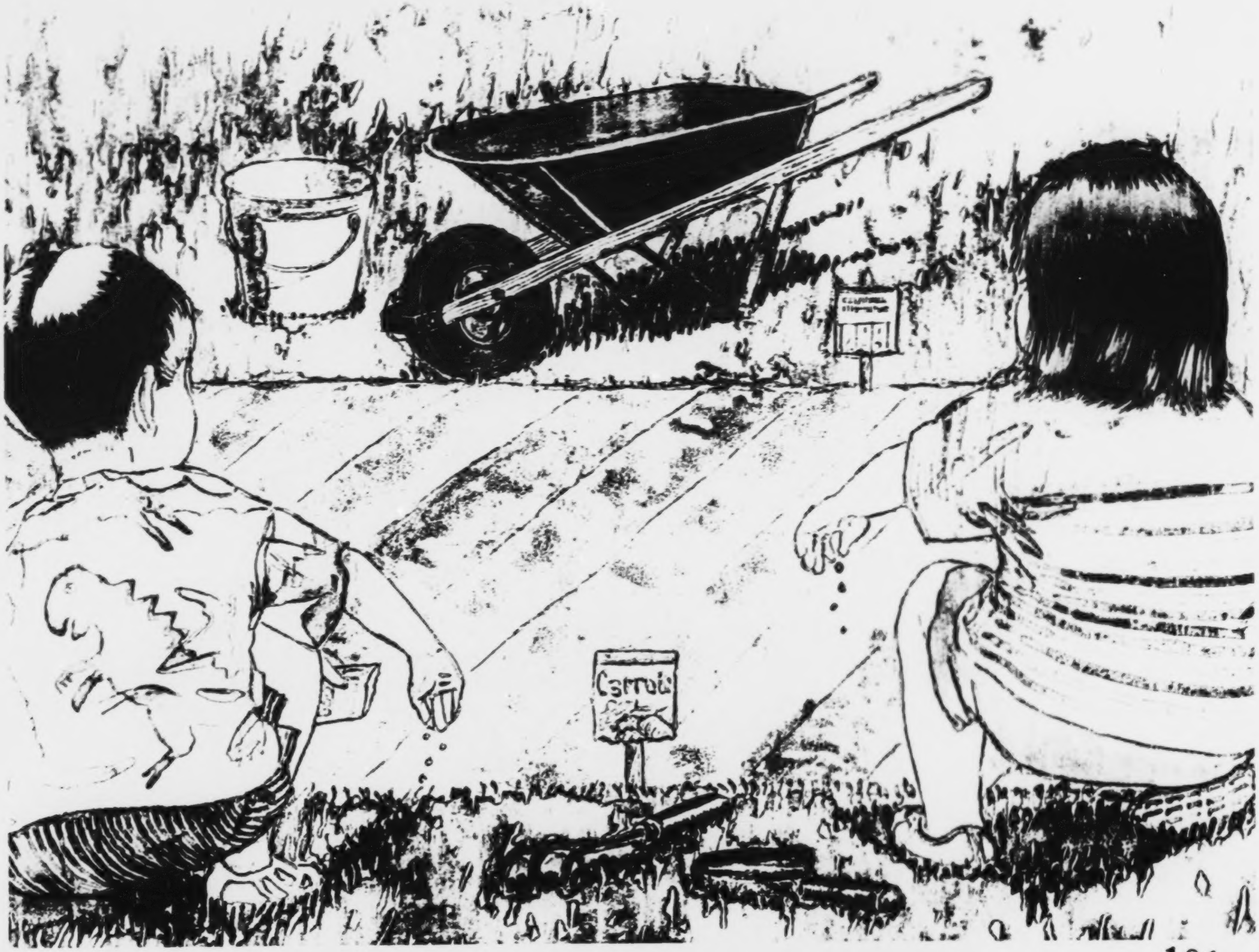
"What now?" the children wondered.



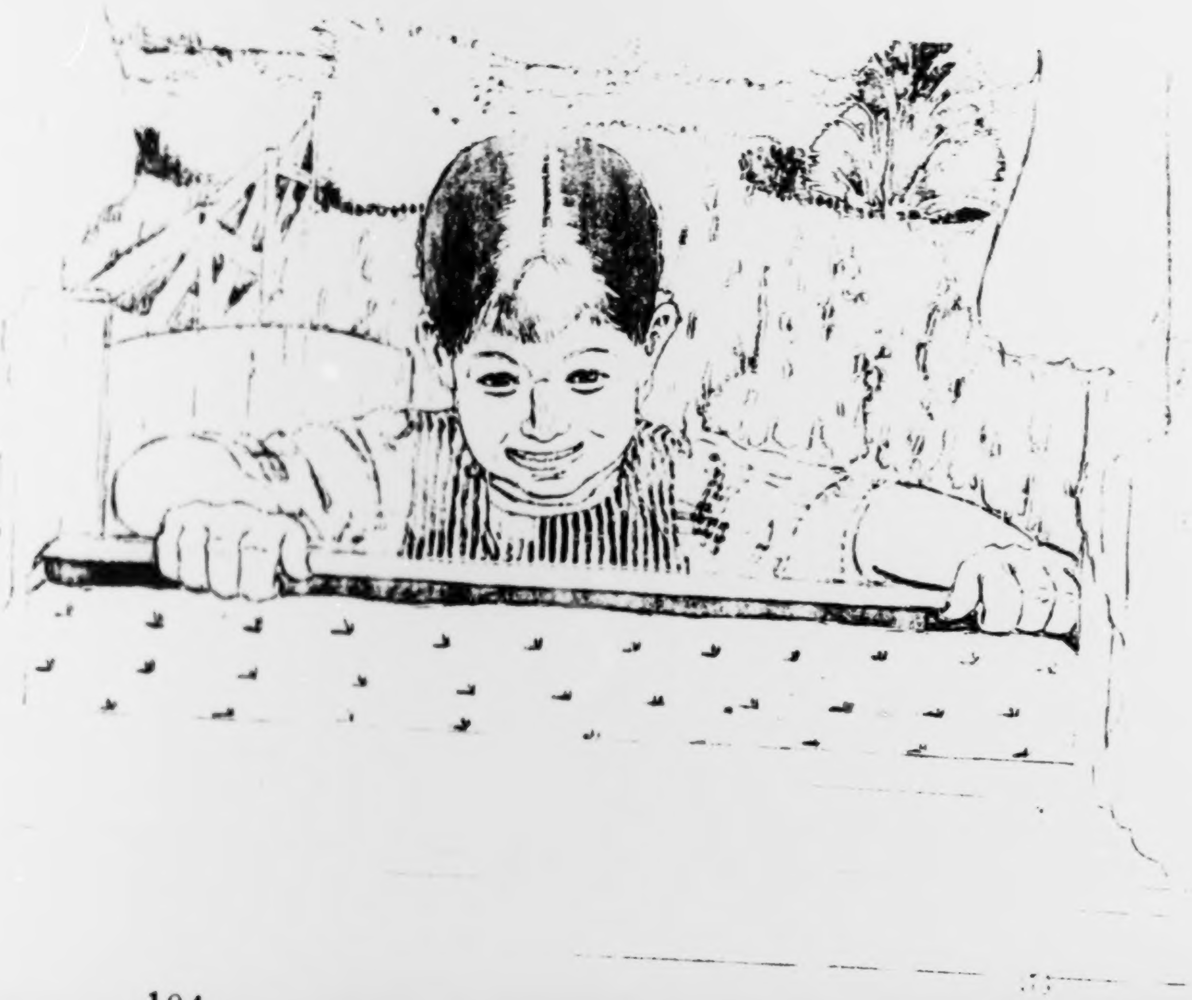
"Why don't we ask our neighbor, Mr. Miller?" said Shantay.
"He can grow anything!"
Mr. Miller was happy to share his gardening hints
with the children. "Carrots need just enough light
and just enough water," he said. "Not too much,
not too little. That's all it takes to have a fine carrot crop."



Denton's Detectives now had a new problem to solve.
How much light and how much water were just enough?
They decided to try an experiment.
They planted some of the seeds in Mrs. Denton's backyard.


Carrots

They planted some of the seeds in the windowbox.



They made a plan for watering the seeds.
They watered some of the backyard seeds once
a day and some twice a day. They watered some of the
windowbox seeds once a day and some twice a day.
Then Denton's Detectives watched to see what happened.

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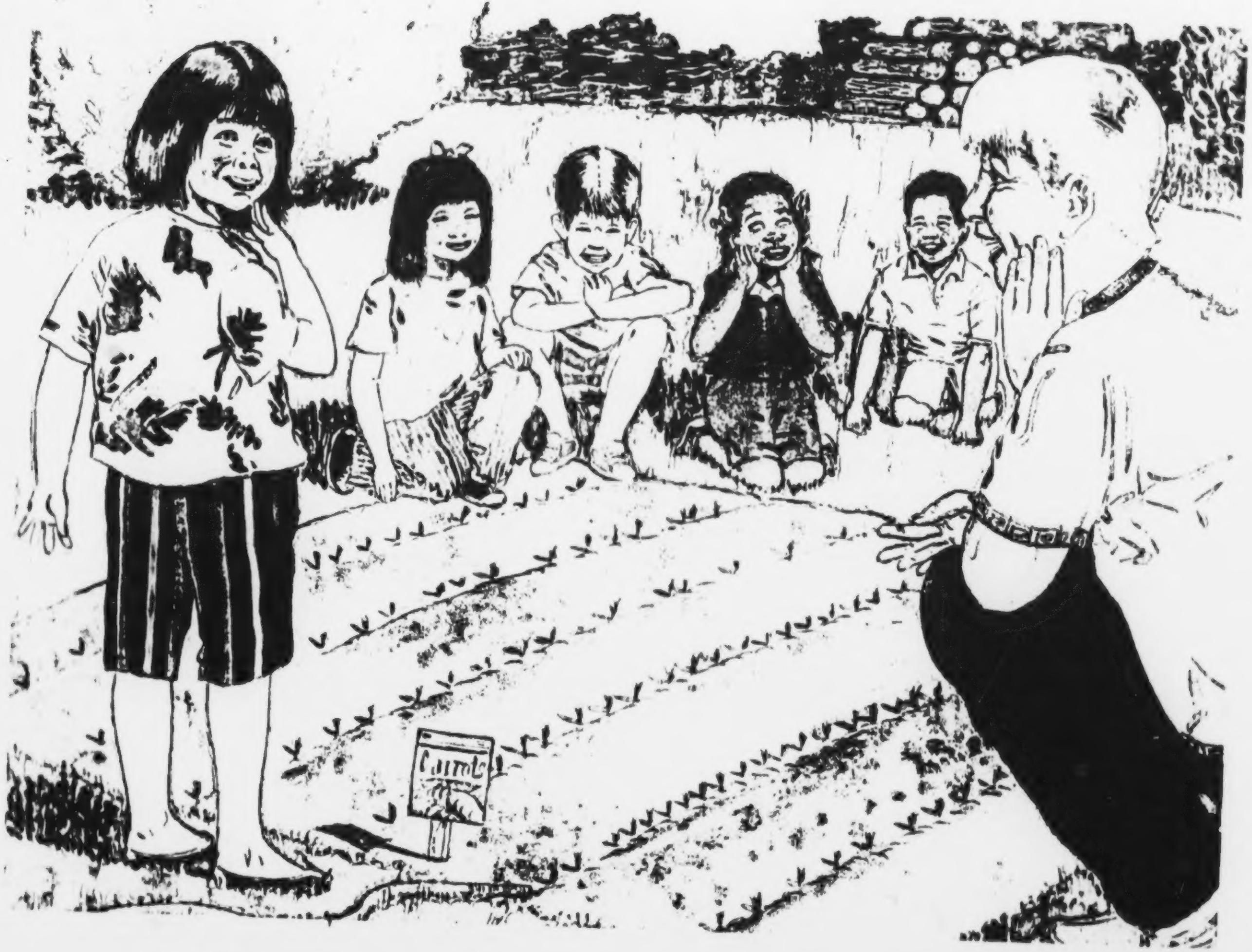
Soon the seeds began to sprout.
All the windowbox plants looked pale and small and
some of the backyard plants were droopy.
Only the backyard plants that were watered once a day
were green and strong.
"Congratulations!" said Mrs. Denton.
"Your good detective work has solved the problem
of how much light and water we need to grow healthy carrots."

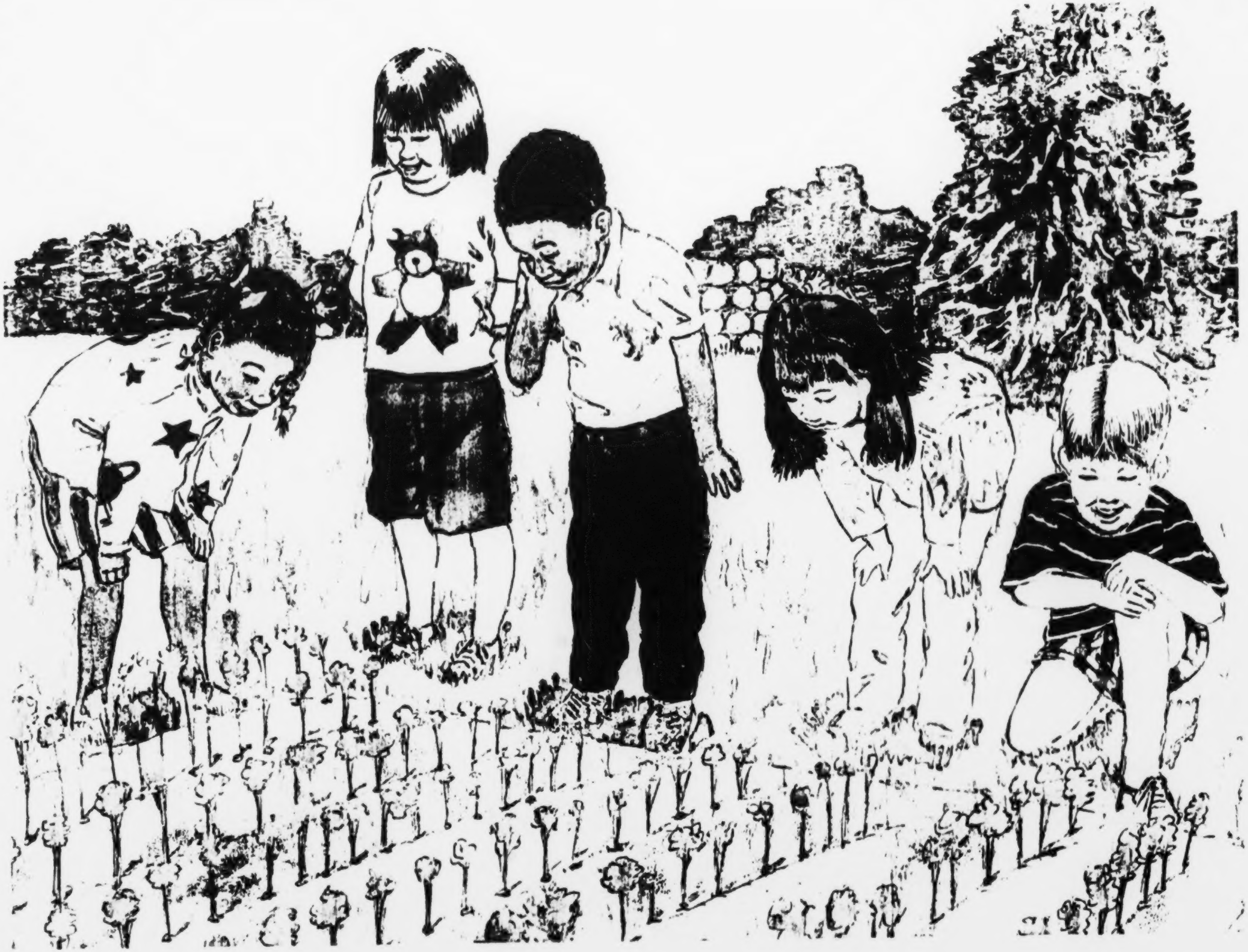


The children planted the rest of the carrot seeds in the backyard and took turns watering them once a day. Before long, the backyard was filled with carrot plants.

"There must be hundreds," said Shantay.

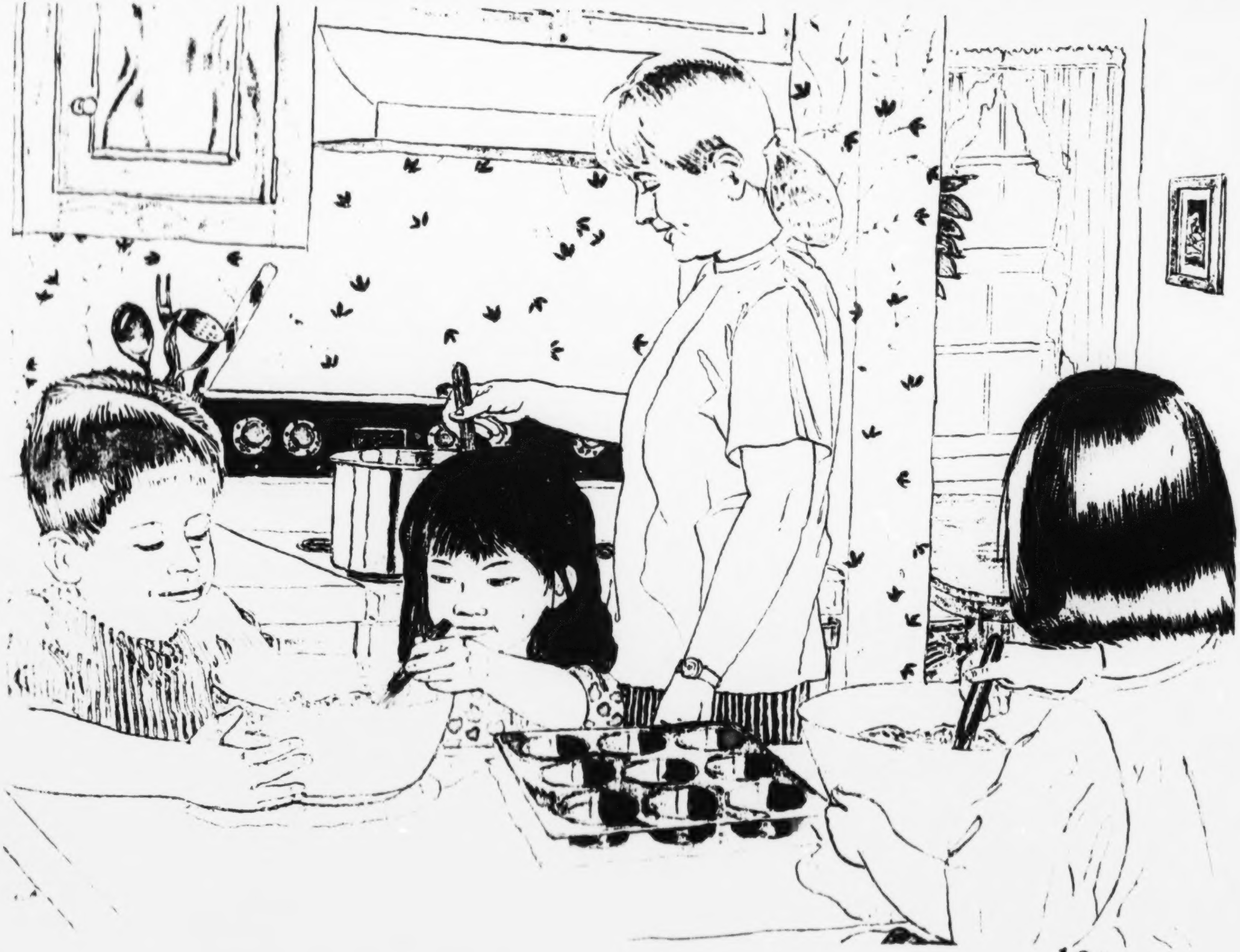
"More like millions," said Vic.

"No, zillions!" said Dawne. "What will we do with them all?"

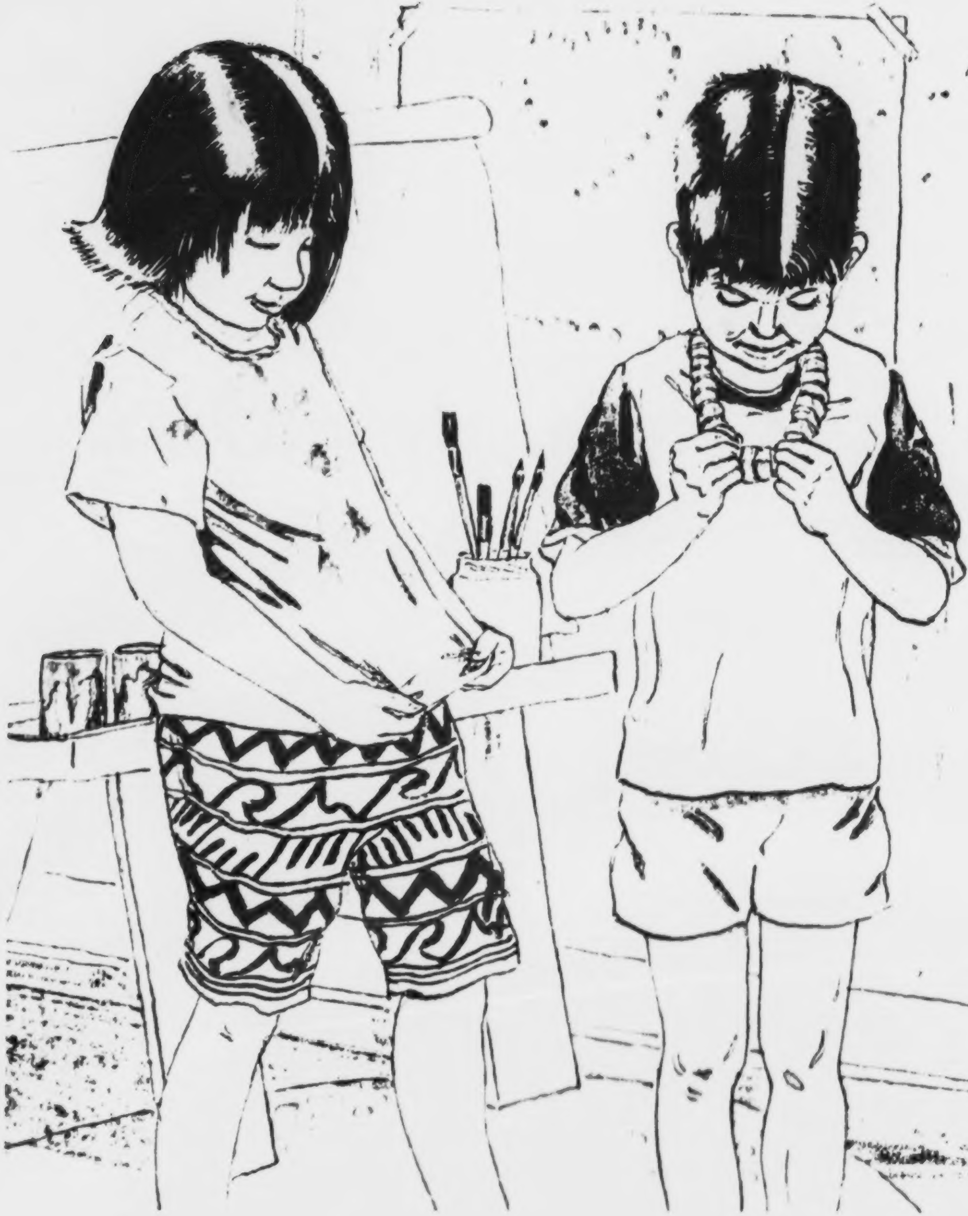


"Well," said Mrs. Denton, "we can put them in soup, mix them in muffins, and chop them up for salads."

"But we'll still have lots of carrots left," said Elizabeth. "How can we use them up?"



"We can tie-dye T-shirts with carrot juice," said Mrs. Denton.
"...and string carrot slices together for necklaces," said Shantay.
"...and cut carrots into shapes and print designs,
just like we do with potatoes," added Vic.
"Then we can have a carrot carnival
for our families and friends," said Mrs. Denton.



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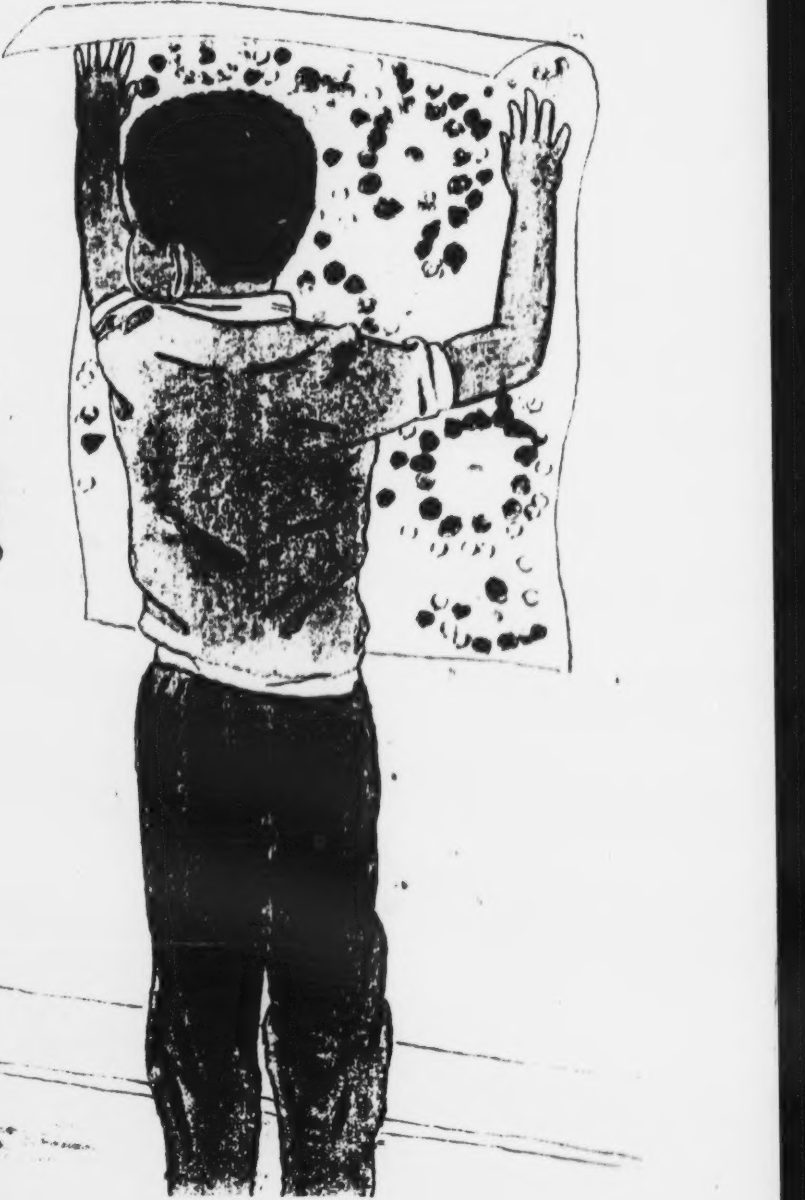

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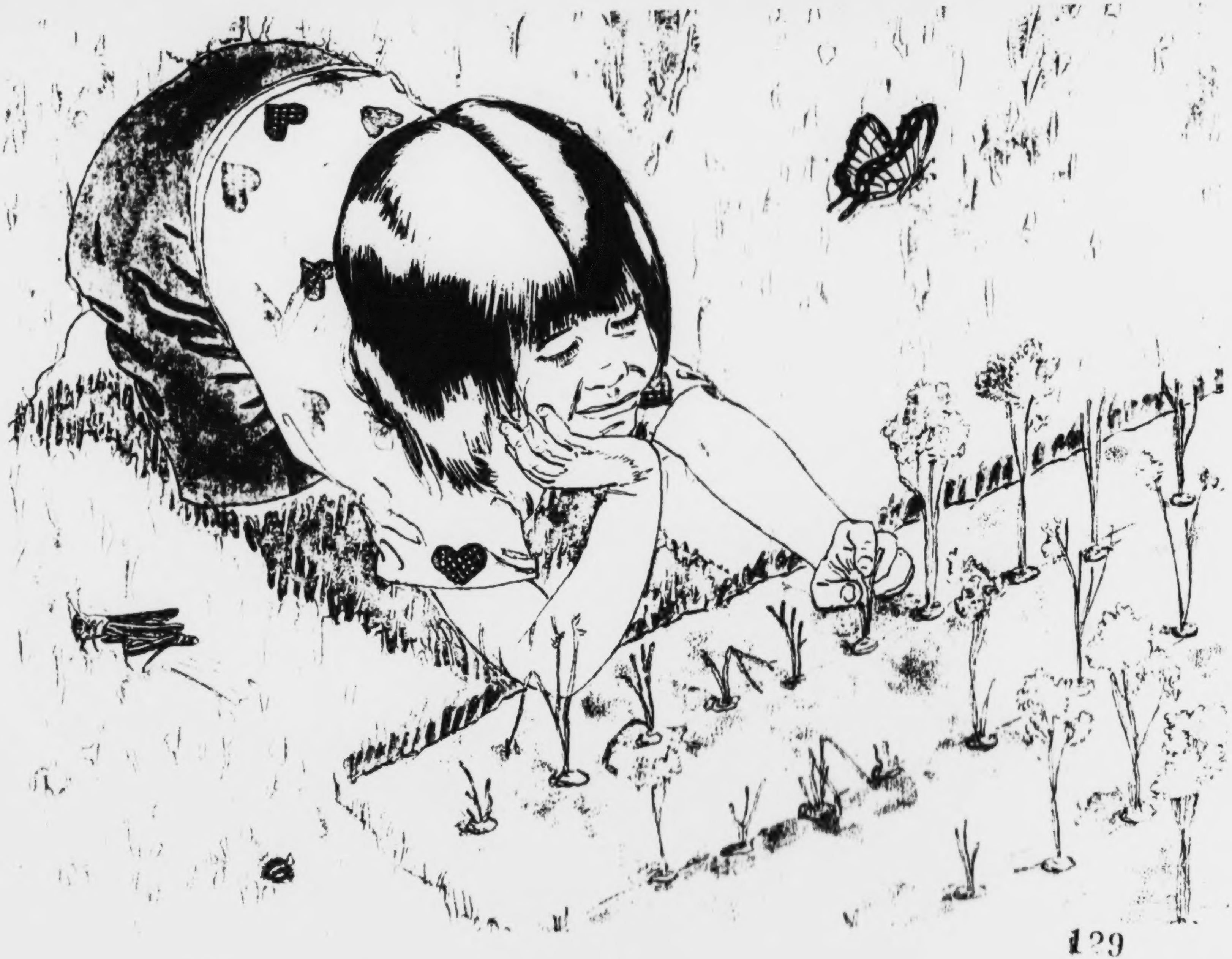
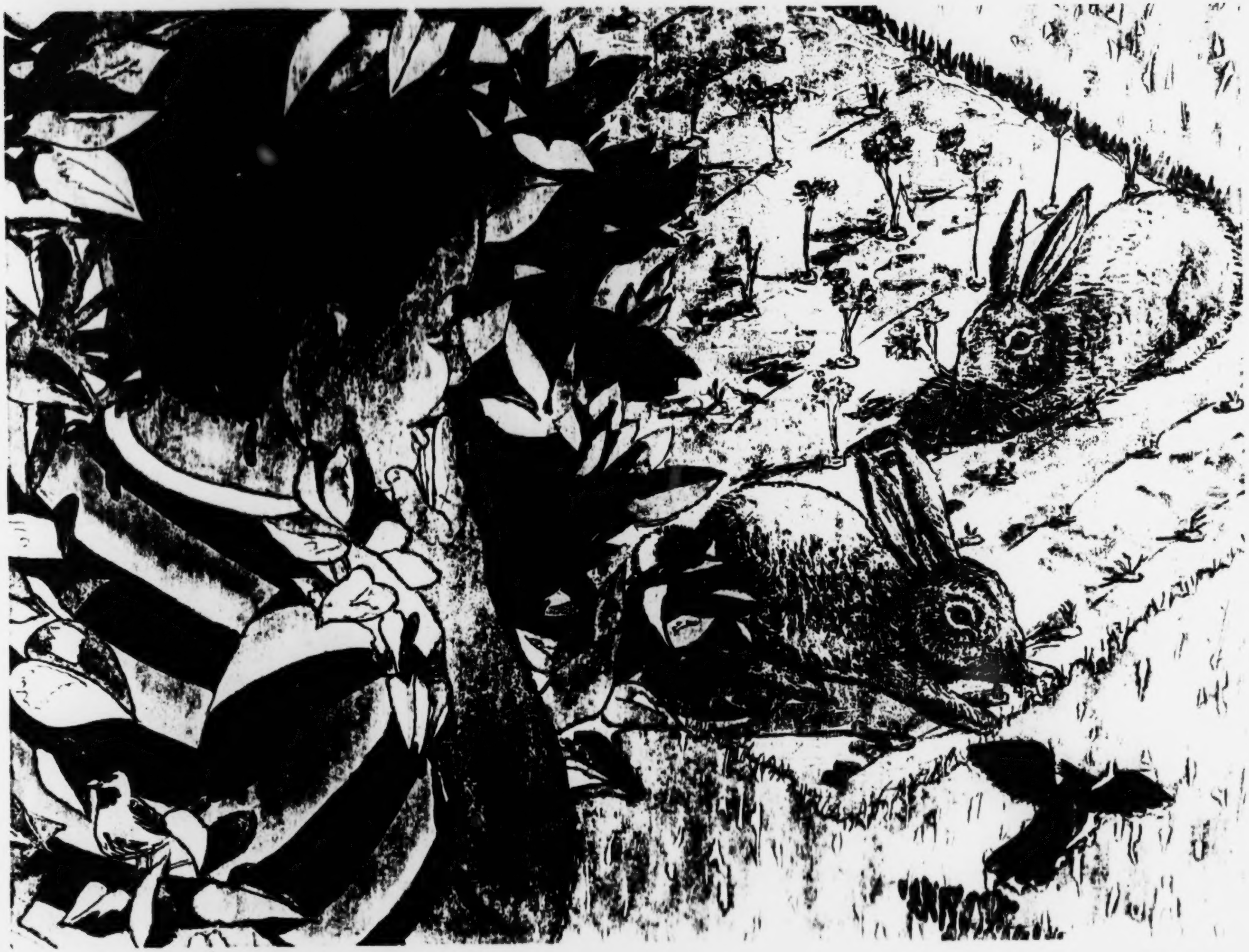
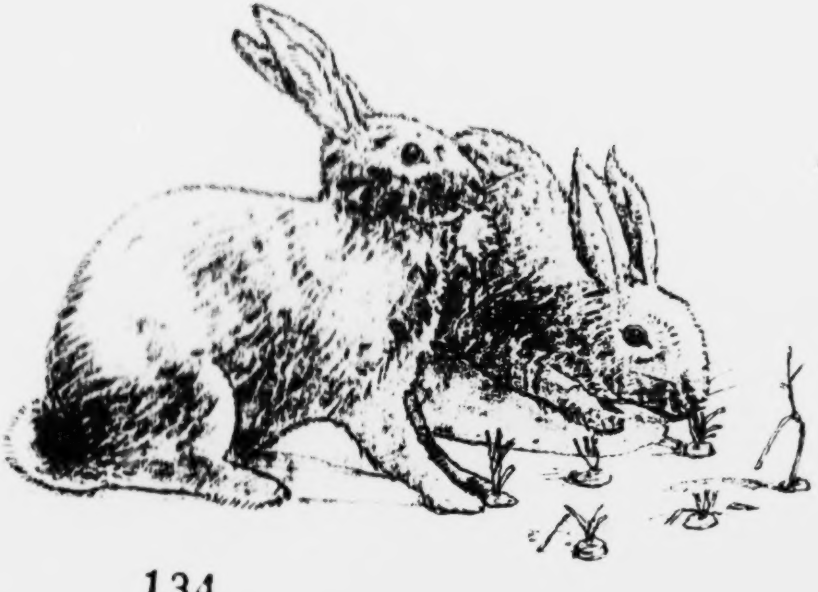
One day, when the children were playing in the backyard,
Dawne made a discovery.
Some of the carrot plants were bent over. Some had
missing tops. And some had completely disappeared.
What was going on?
This was another job for Denton's Detectives.



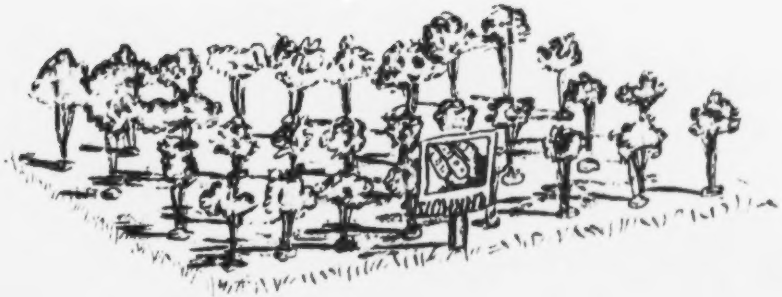
*F*or days, the children watched the garden for clues.
One afternoon, David spotted two rabbits nibbling at the carrots.
"Come look," he called quietly.

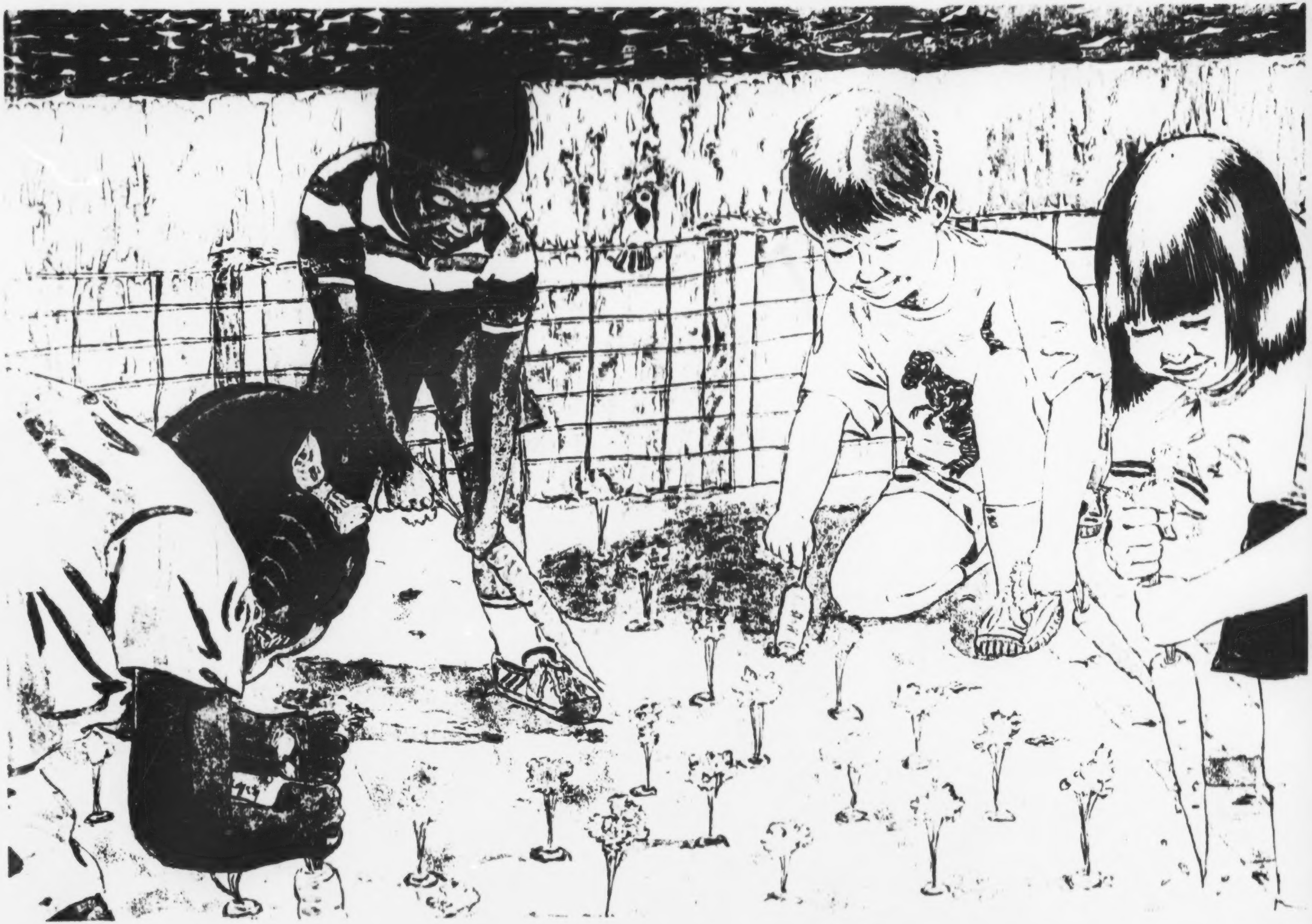


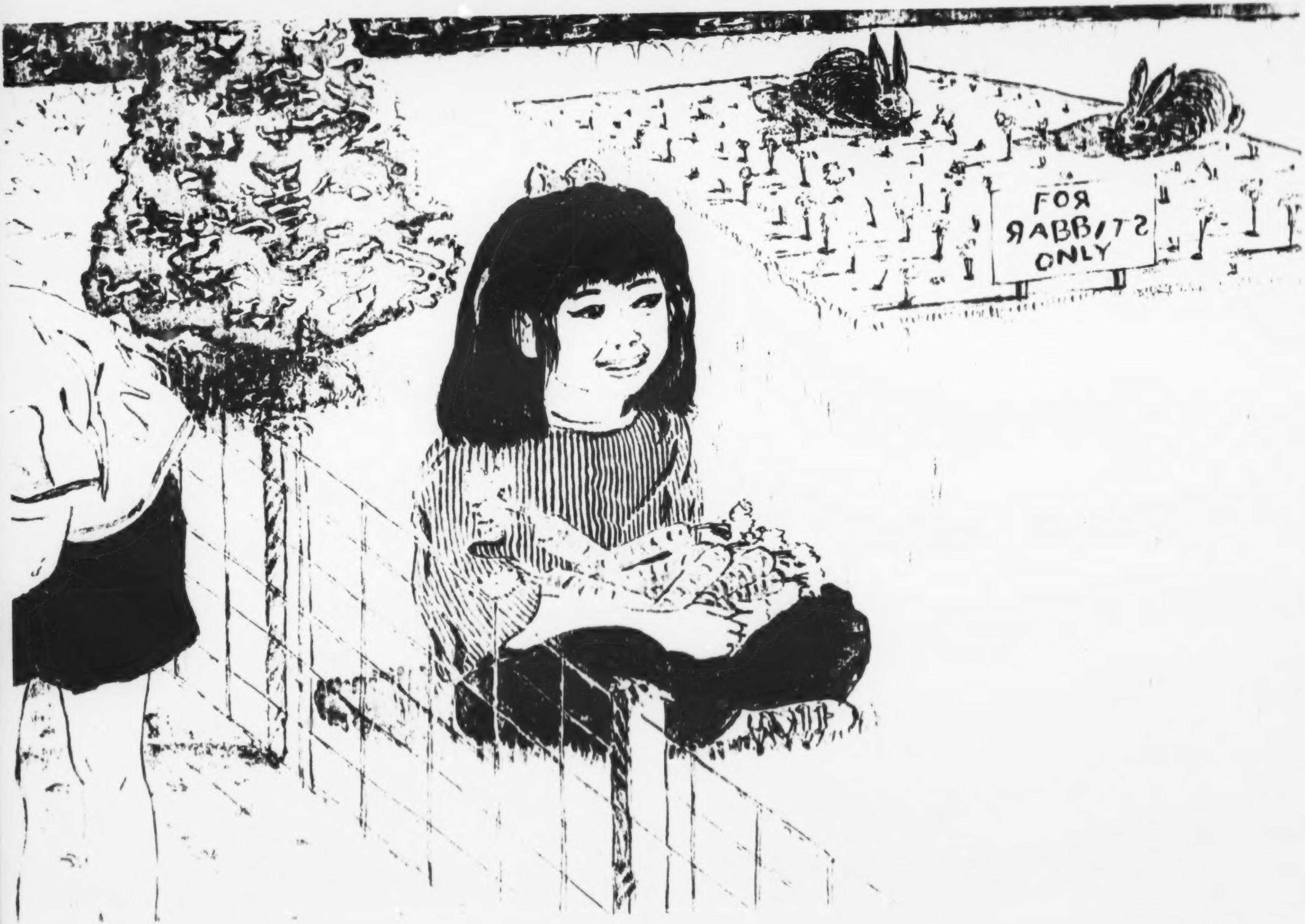
" *W*hat should we do?" whispered Dawne. "We need carrots for the carnival, but we don't want the rabbits to go hungry."



"*H*mmmmmm," said Vic, "How about this?"

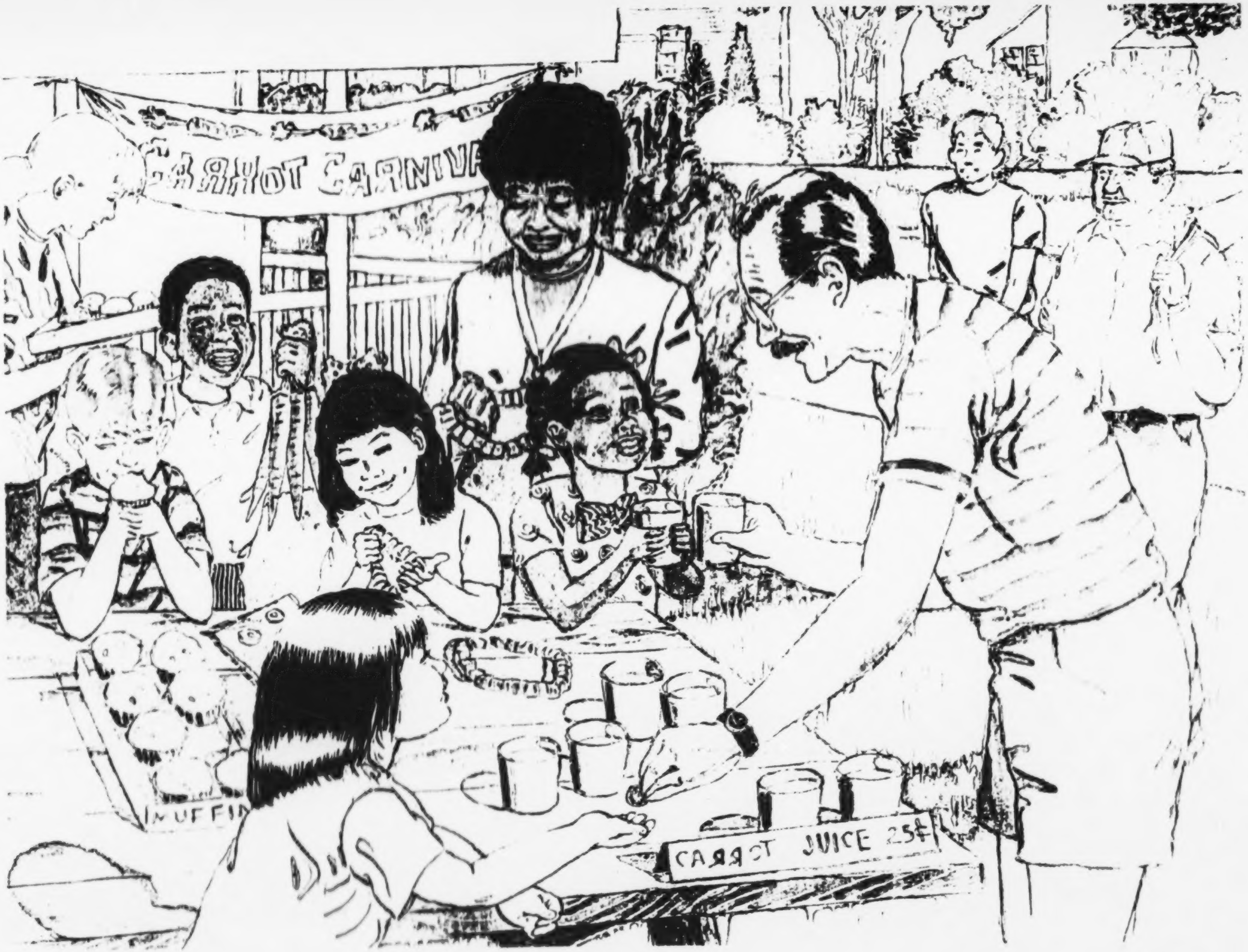





FOR RABBITS ONLY

Denton's Detectives had solved another problem. "Good work," said Mrs. Denton to the children. "Now the carrot carnival can begin!"

THE END


CARROT CARNIVAL
MUFFIN
CARROT JUICE 25¢

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  Landover Hills, Maryland

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- Robert Soulé
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Super Duper Timmy Cooper
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Guide for Parents

Guide for Caregivers

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Super Duper Timmy Cooper

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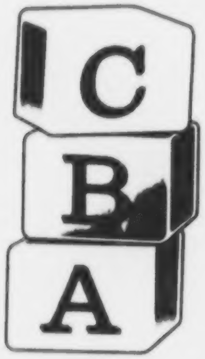
Super Duper Timmy Cooper

A Building Blocks Picture Book for Five-Year-Olds



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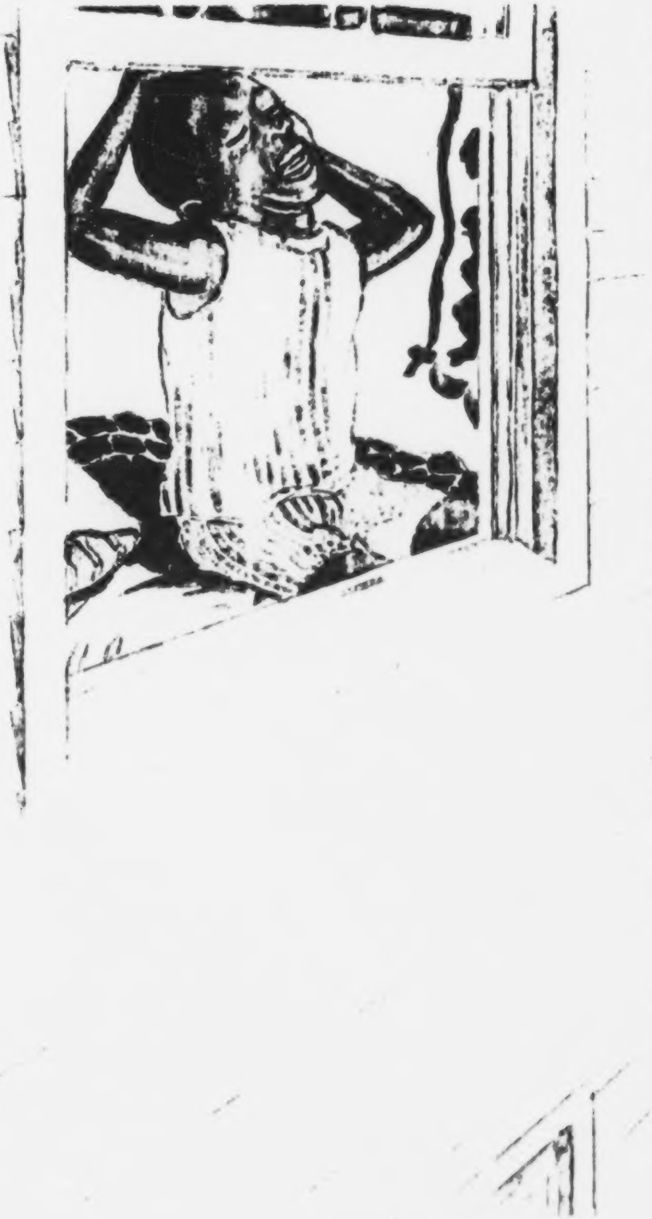
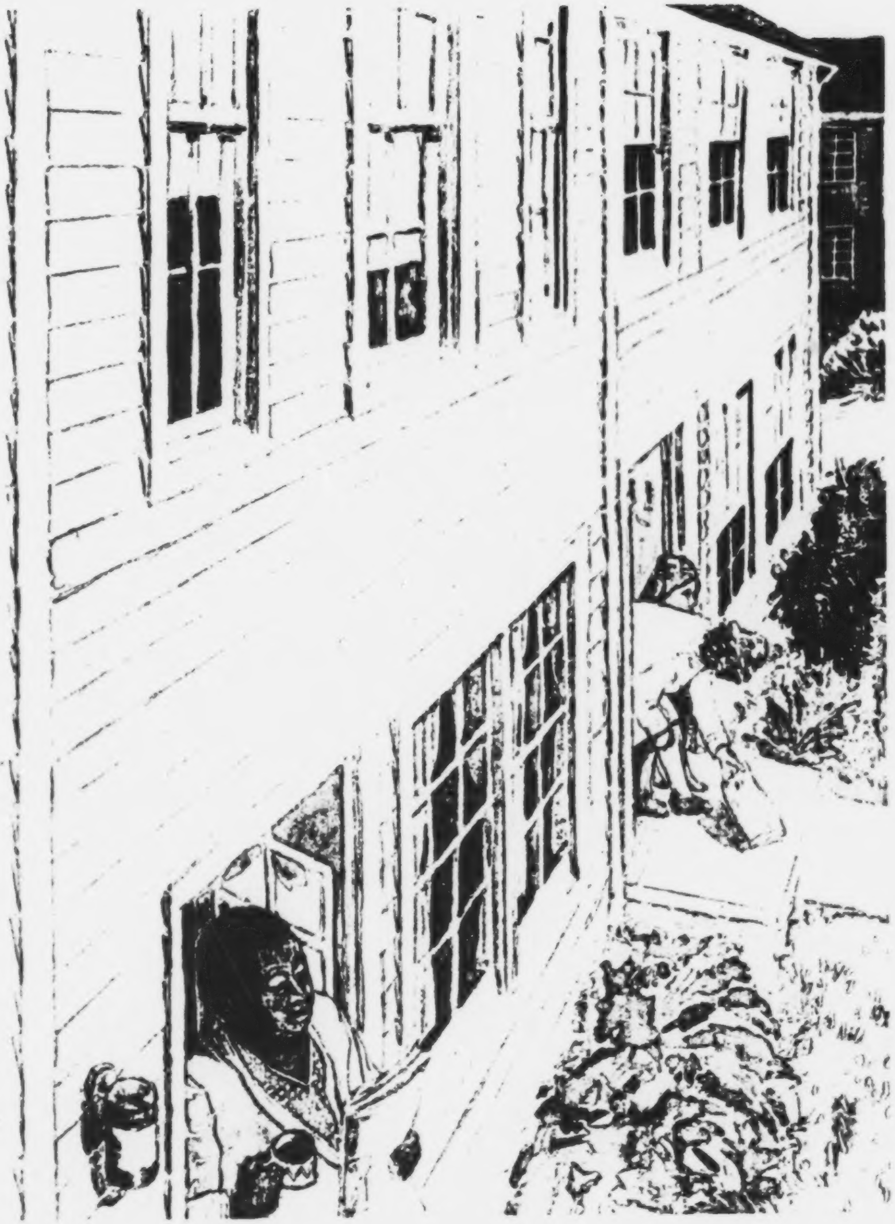
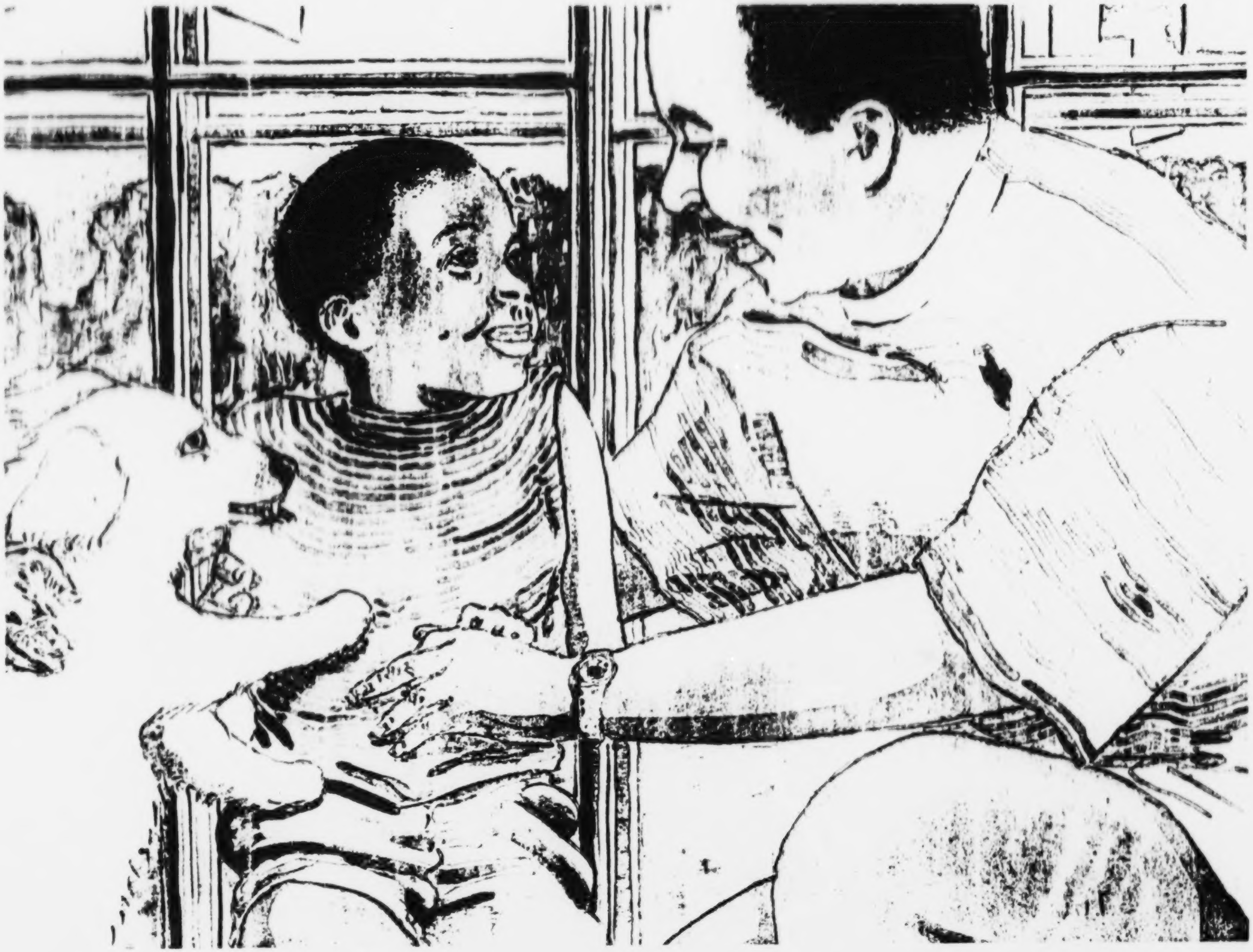
Timmy Cooper always jumped out of bed early on Saturday mornings because that was the day he and his dad went to their neighborhood park together. Sometimes Timmy's dog, Duke, went along.

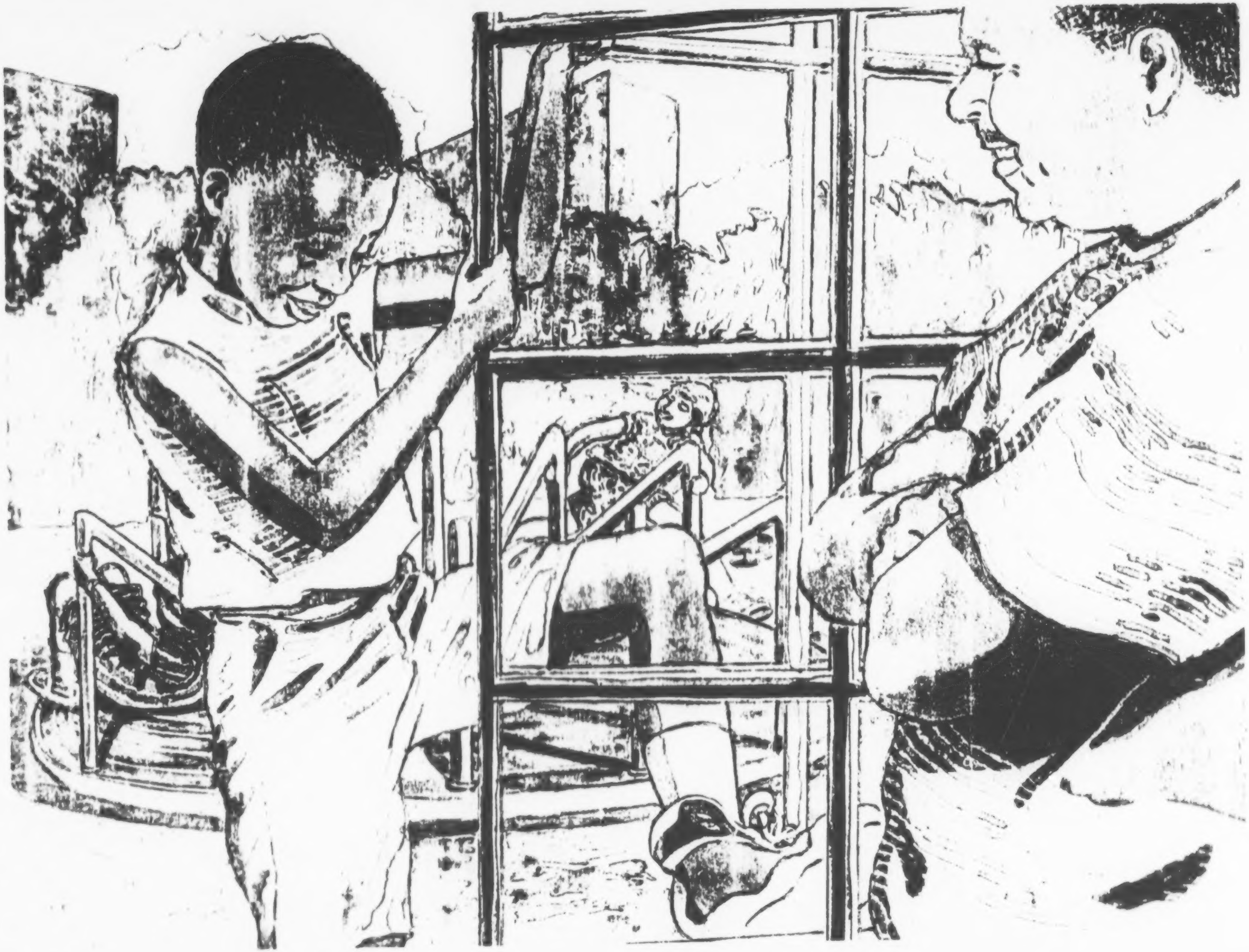




In the park, Timmy played on the slide and swings and seesaw, but that wasn't enough. "What I want to do is climb to the top of the jungle gym, do a flip and jump to the ground without falling over," he told his dad. "That's my biggest wish."



"Then I'll help you," said Timmy's dad. "If you keep practicing, you'll get your wish. Let's get started by climbing to the top."
Timmy practiced climbing over and over again. Finally,
he made it to the top.
"That's terrific, Timmy!" said his dad.



*T*he next time they went to the park, Timmy's dad showed him how to flip. Timmy tried very hard, but he just couldn't flip all the way over. "I can't do it," Timmy complained to his dad. "My wish will never come true." "Just keep working at it, Timmy," said his dad. "You'll get there."

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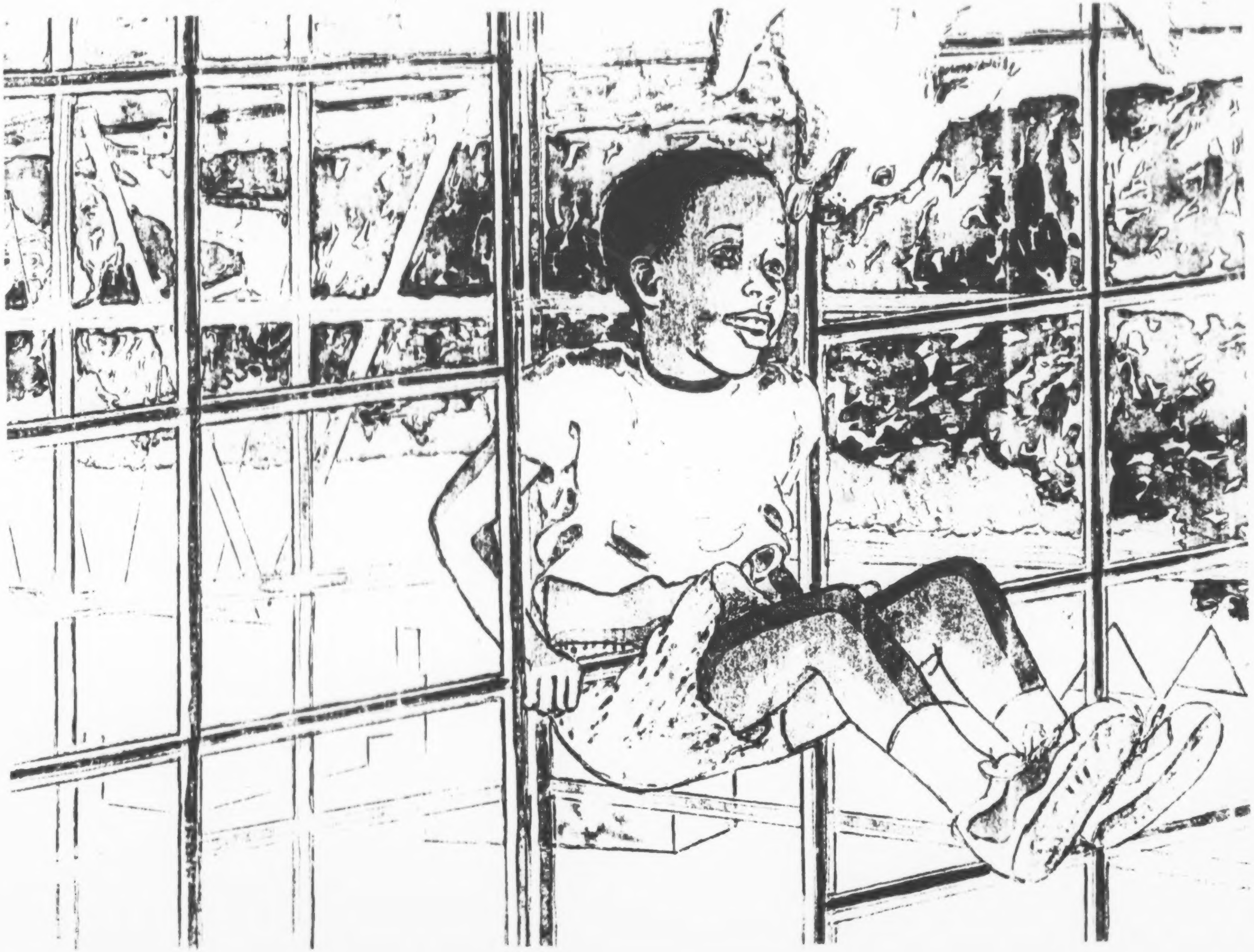
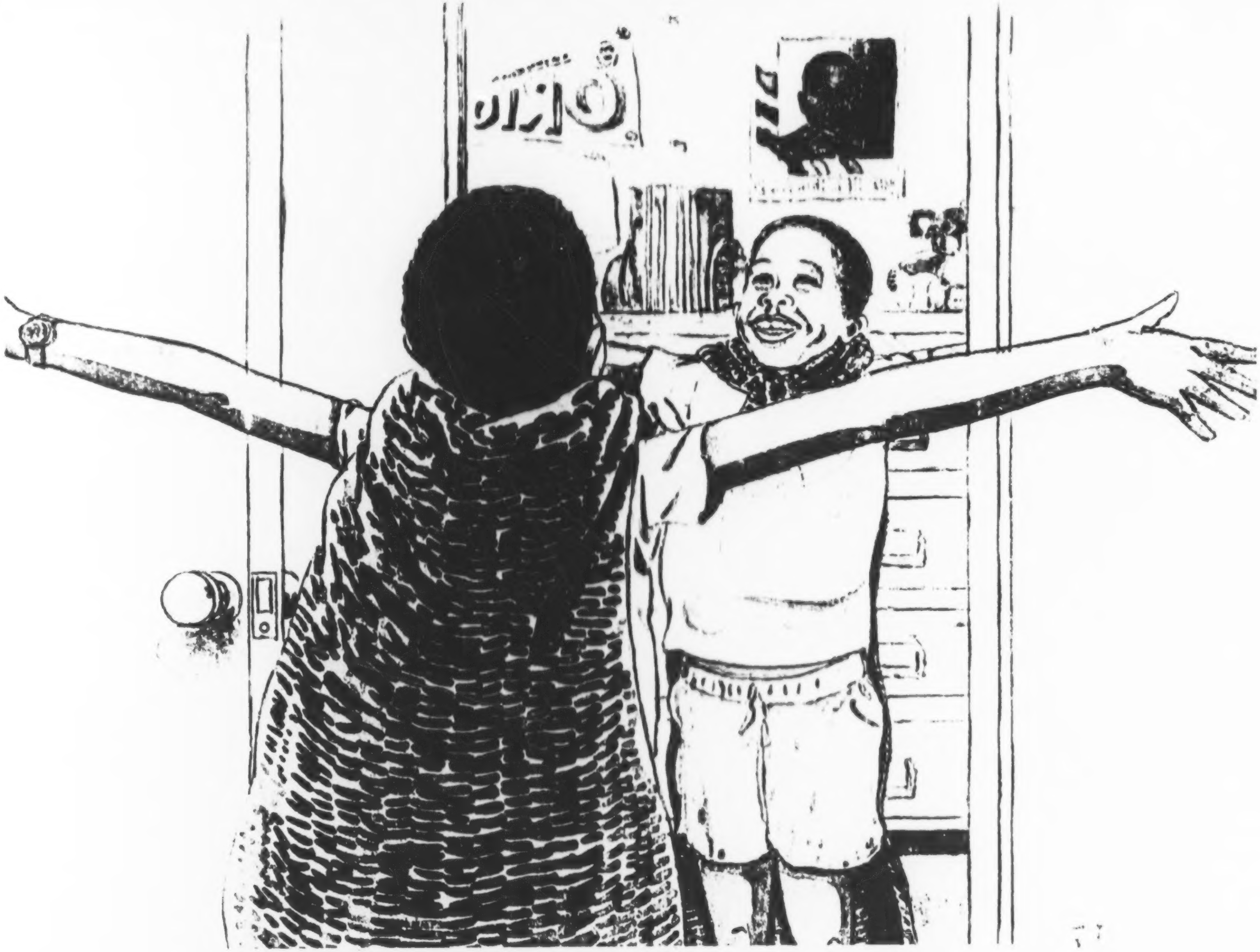
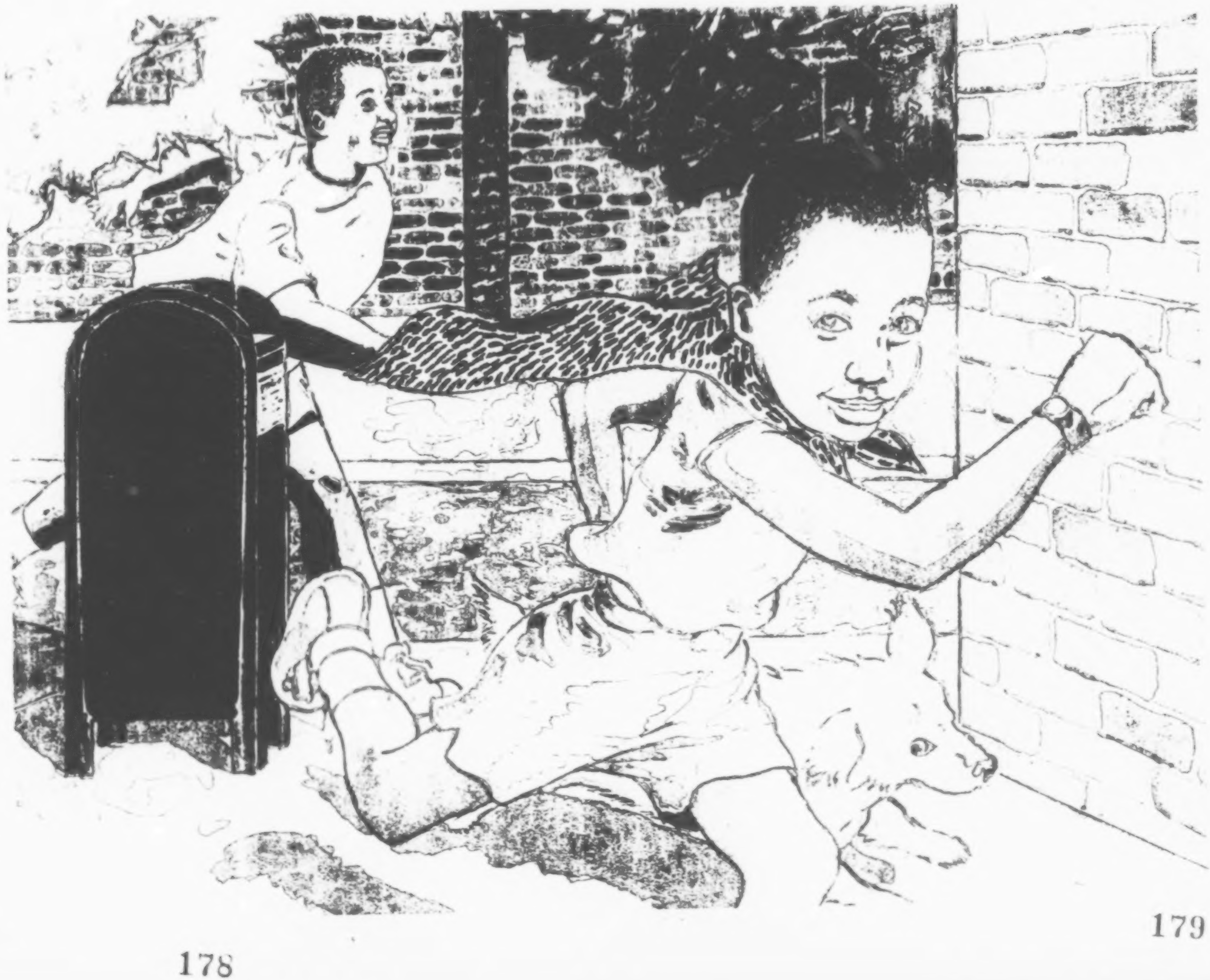


*T*hat evening, while Timmy and his mom were reading his favorite superhero stories, he had a great idea.
Maybe if he wore a cape like Hawk Man, he'd be able to flip over.
After they finished reading, Timmy found a big blue towel, tied it around his shoulders and stood in front of his mirror. "This ought to do it," he said happily. Then he put his new cape away.

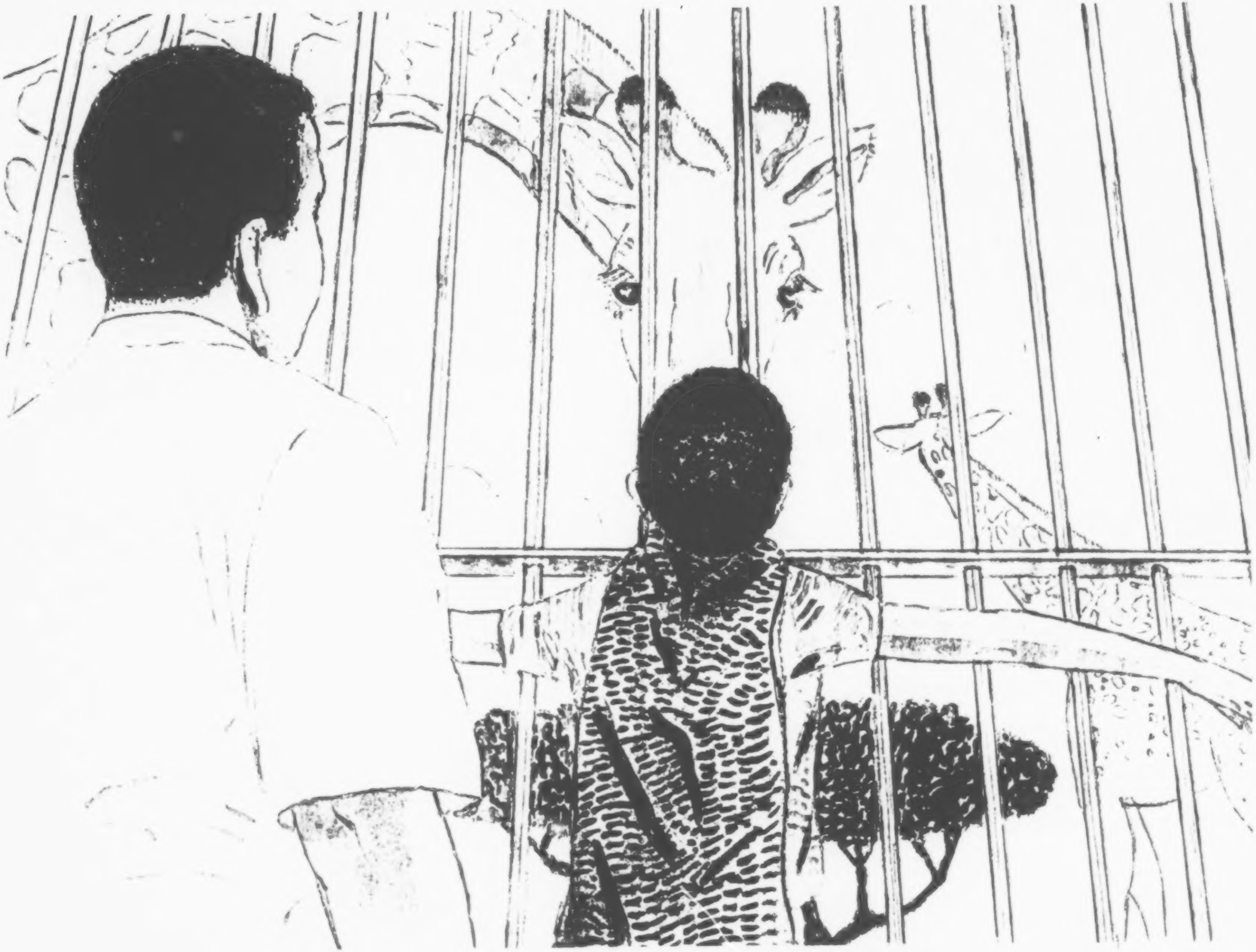


*T*immy wore his beautiful blue cape the next time he and his dad went to the park. As he ran toward the playground, his cape flew out behind him. "Let me hold the cape, Timmy, so you don't hurt yourself," said his dad. Timmy climbed right to the top of the jungle gym and, after several tries, he flipped all the way over. "Good job, Timmy!" said his dad. "Now, the next step is to learn to land without falling."



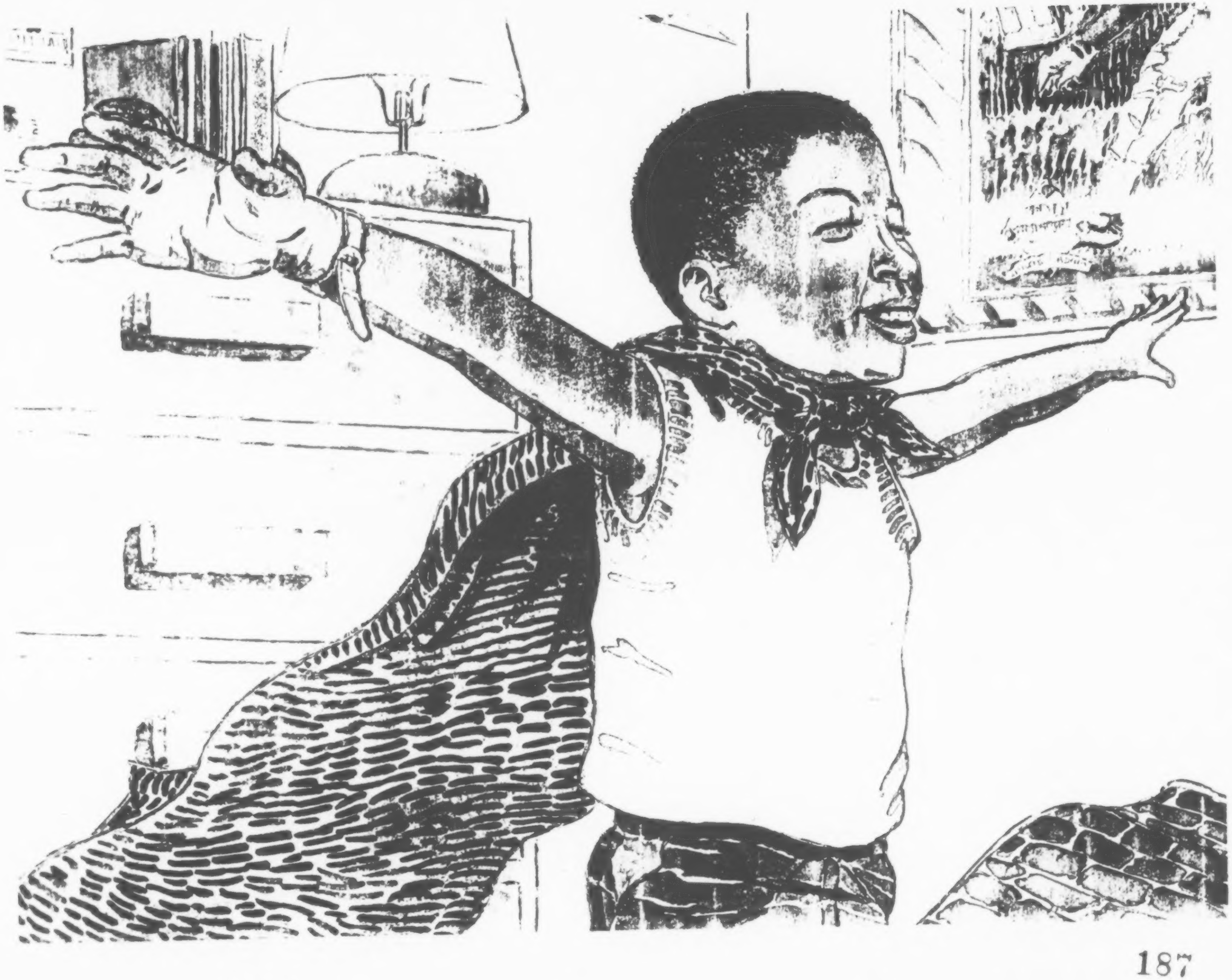
*T*immy's dad showed him how to bend his knees and raise his arms to keep his balance. Sometimes Timmy remembered to bend his knees; other times he raised his arms. But he had trouble doing both at the same time.

"My wish isn't coming true no matter how hard I try," he said. He was so disappointed, his dad took him to the zoo on the way home.



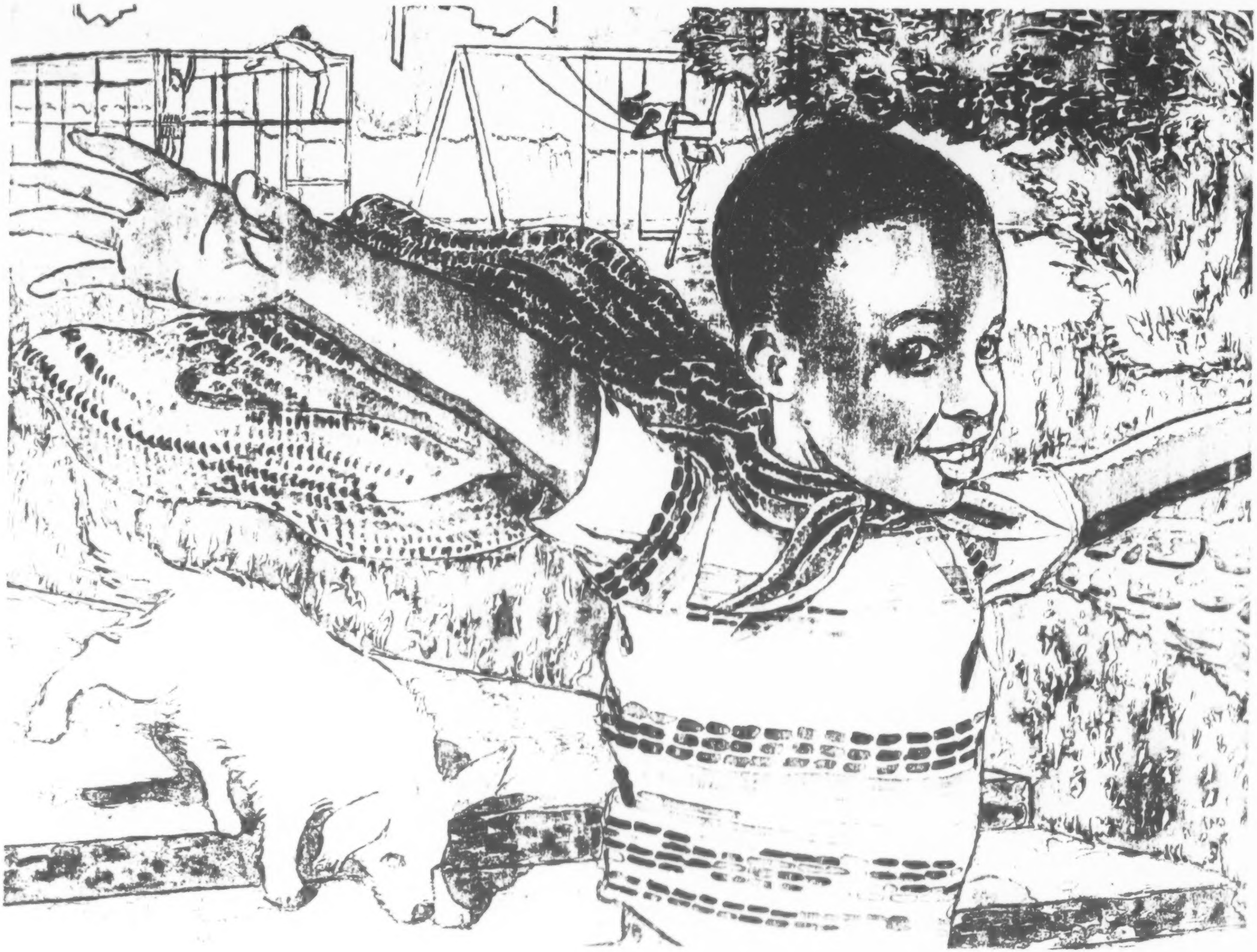
*T*hat night, before he went to bed, Timmy decided he needed more help to make his wish come true. "Maybe if I spin three times and say secret words like Hawk Man does, I'll get my wish," he said. He spun around in a circle and shouted:

"Crackity crack! Kaboom Kapow!
Make me super duper now!"

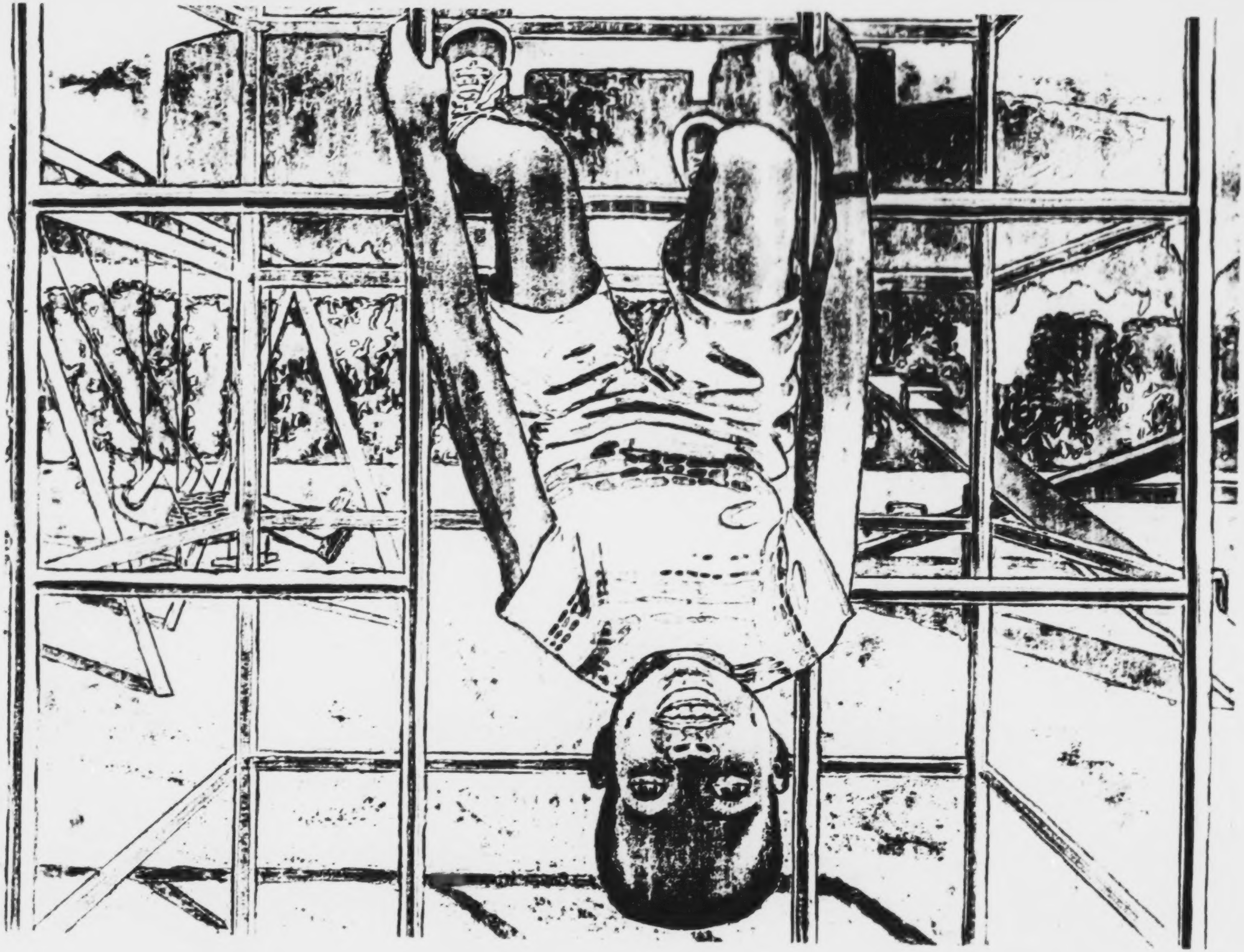


*T*he next time Timmy and his dad went to the park, they took Duke with them. Before Timmy started climbing the jungle gym, he spun around in a circle and repeated the magic words:

"Crackity crack! Kaboom kapow!
Make me super duper now!"



Timmy gave his cape to his dad and climbed the jungle gym.
When he reached the top, Timmy swung his legs,
took a deep breath, flipped and jumped. He landed perfectly.
"Look Dad!" he yelled. "I'm doing it!
I flipped and landed without falling!"
"That's terrific, Timmy!" said his dad, as he handed Timmy his cape.
"All that practice really paid off."
"Now I'm Super Duper Timmy Cooper," said Timmy proudly.



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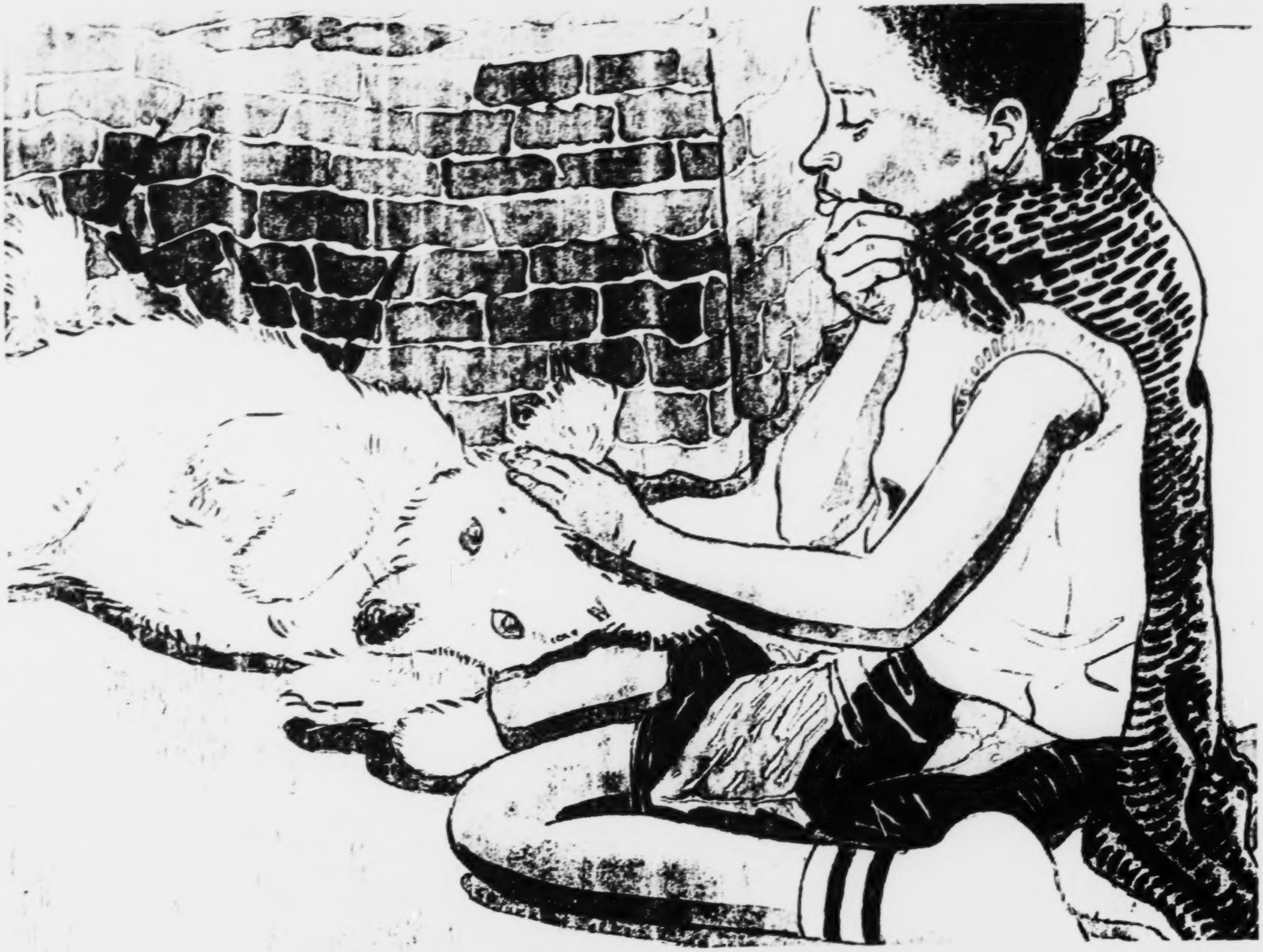
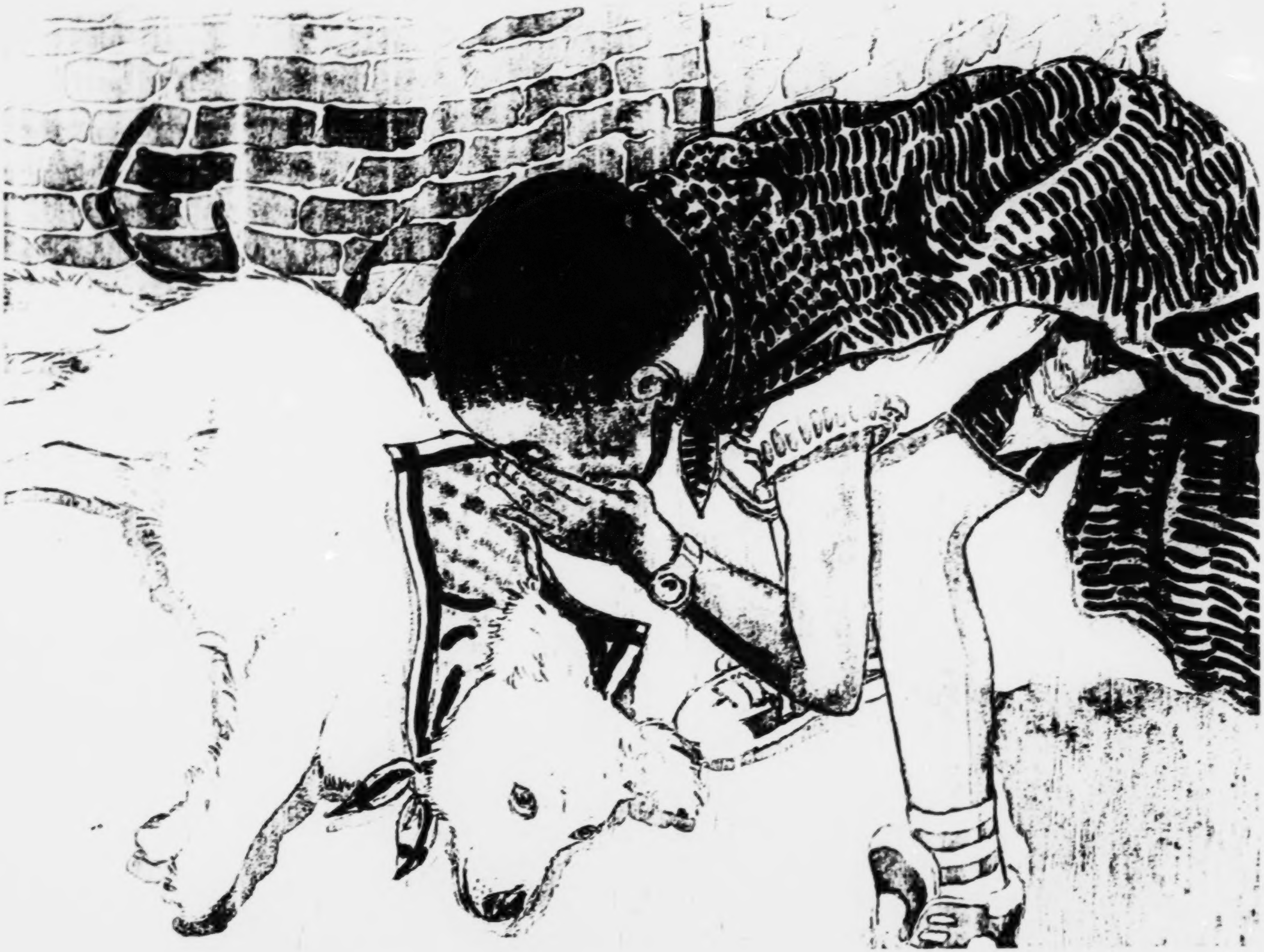
The next day, while Timmy was playing with his dog, he had an idea. "Come here, Duke," he said, scratching the dog's ear. "Now that I'm Super Duper Timmy Cooper, I need a super sidekick just like Hawk Man's. Maybe you can be Mighty Mutt and do tricks for me."



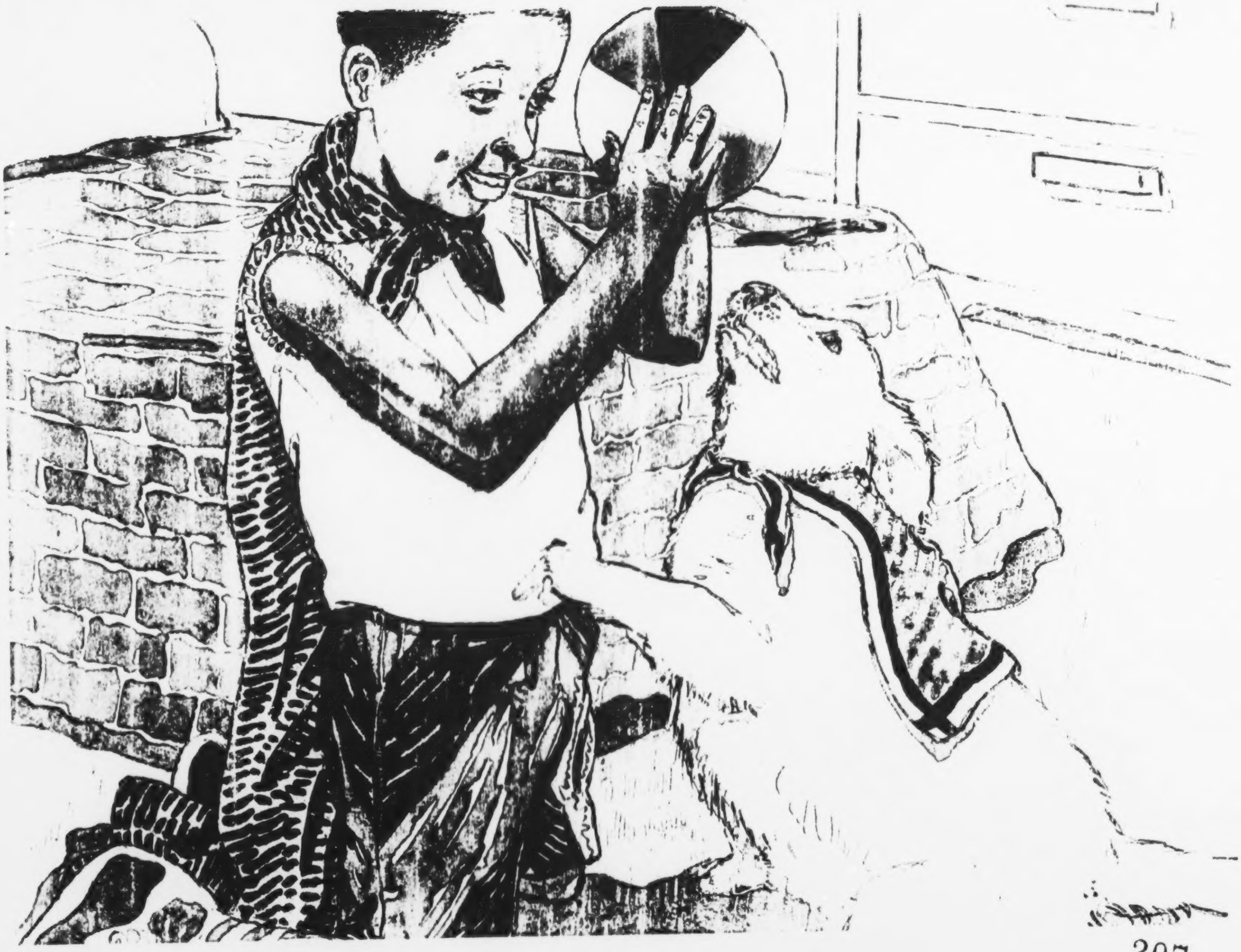
*T*immy tied an old blue scarf around Duke's neck, just like Hawk Man's cape, and whispered the secret words into Duke's ear:

"Crackity crack! Kaboom kapow!
Make Duke super duper now!"



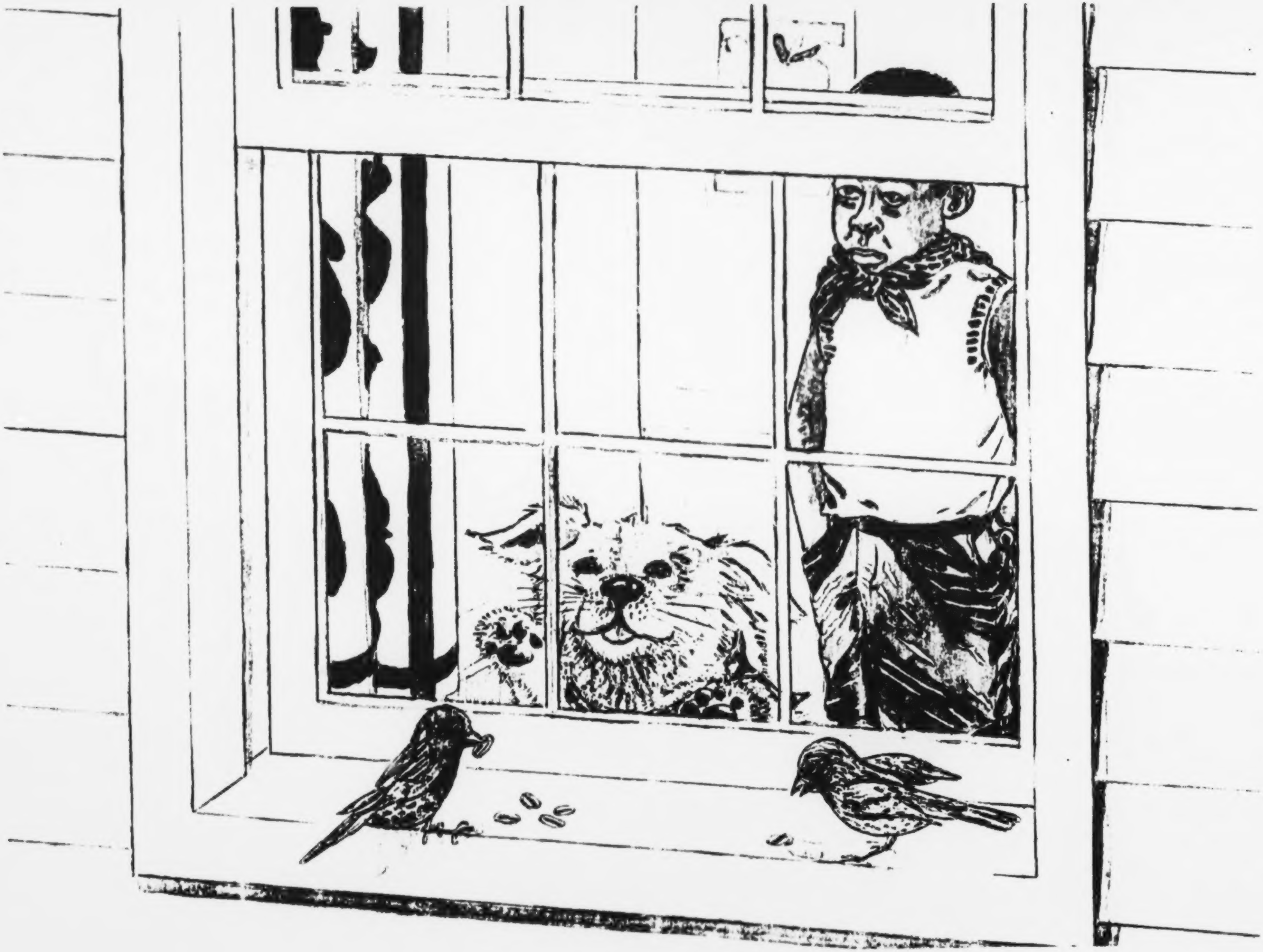
Then Timmy picked up a ball and rolled it across the room.

"Okay, Mighty Mutt," he said, "fetch!"

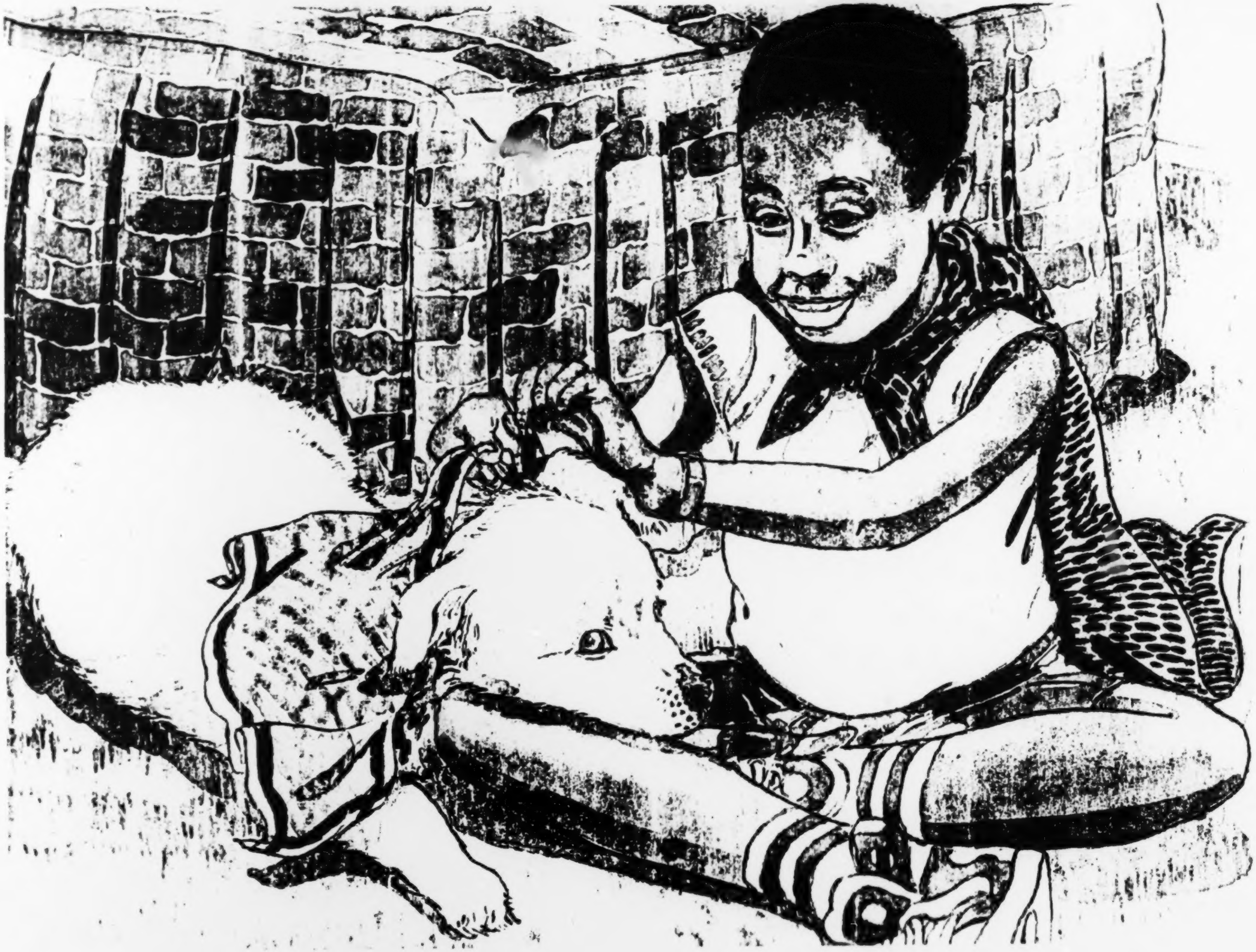


Duke looked at Timmy, looked at the ball and ran to the window and barked at some birds. Then he crawled under the bed and hid. "Something's wrong," thought Timmy as Duke crept slowly from under the bed. "Maybe Mighty Mutt didn't hear me." Then Timmy yelled the secret words:

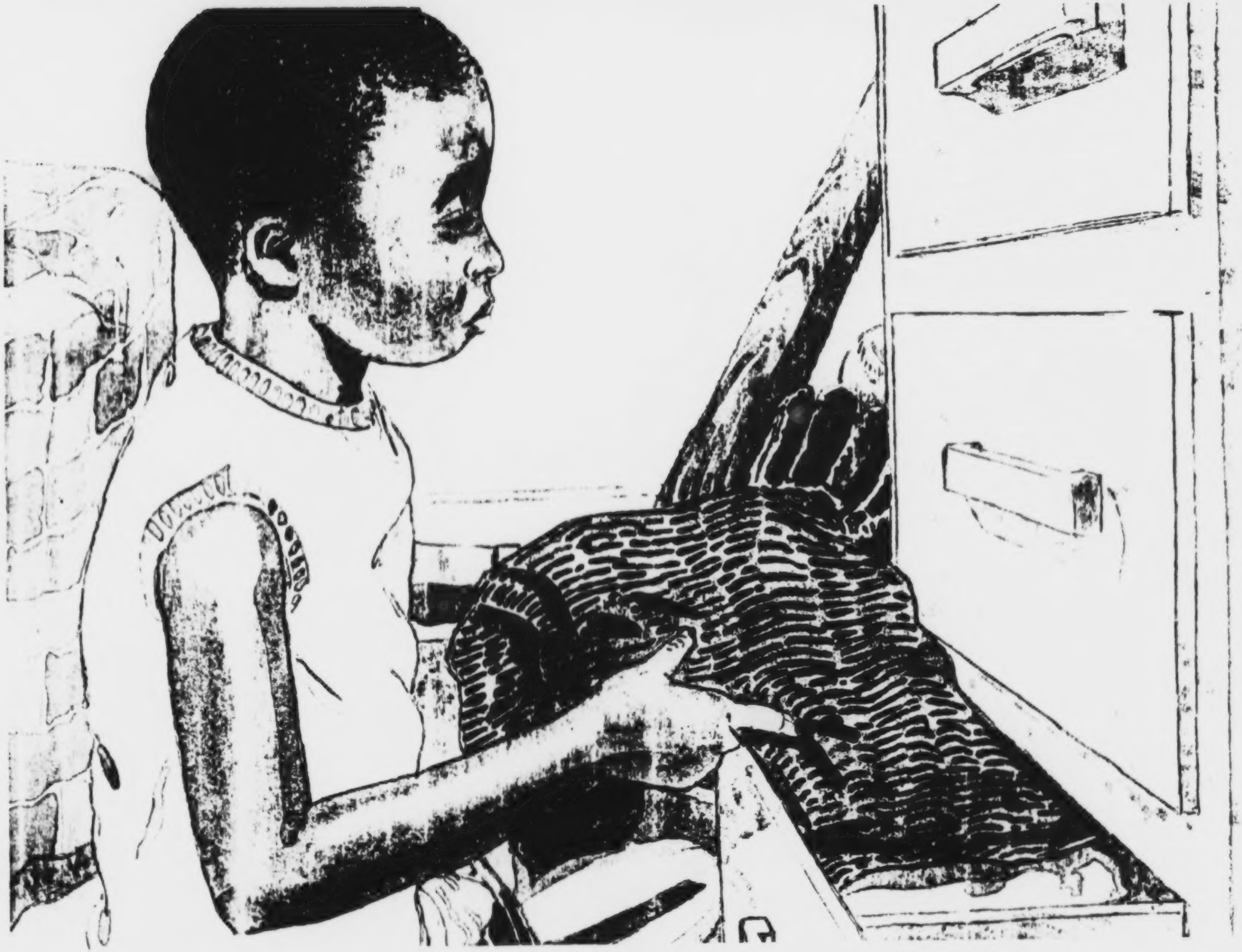
"Crackity crack! Kaboom kapow!
Make Duke super duper now!"



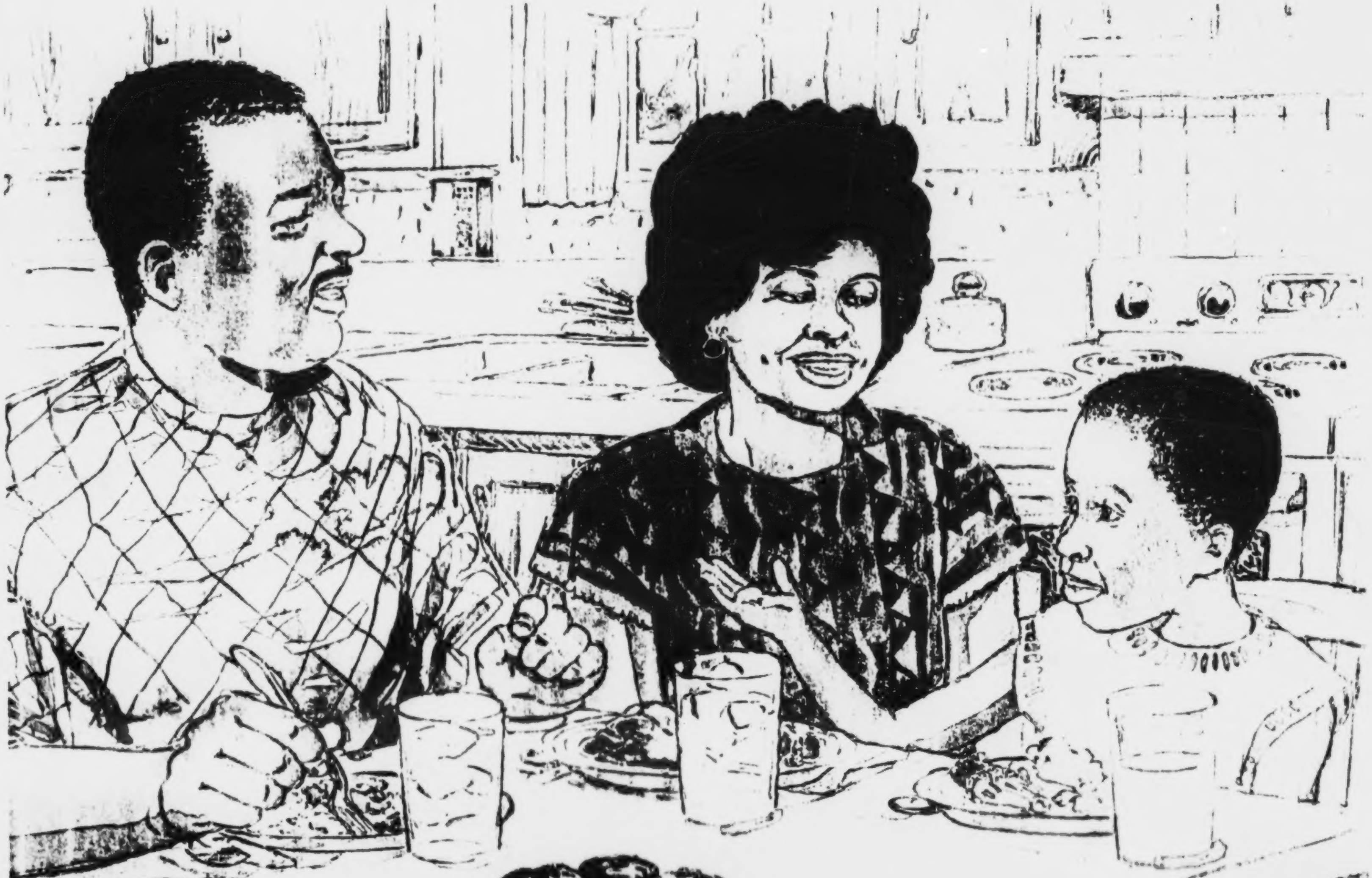
*H*e rolled the ball again, pointed at Duke and said, "Fetch, Mighty Mutt, fetch!" Duke didn't move. "Hmm," thought Timmy, "I bet I don't have the cape on right." He retied the scarf around Duke's neck and straightened it. "Get ready, Mighty Mutt. Good boy, now, fetch!" ordered Timmy. The dog sniffed and ran out the bedroom door.



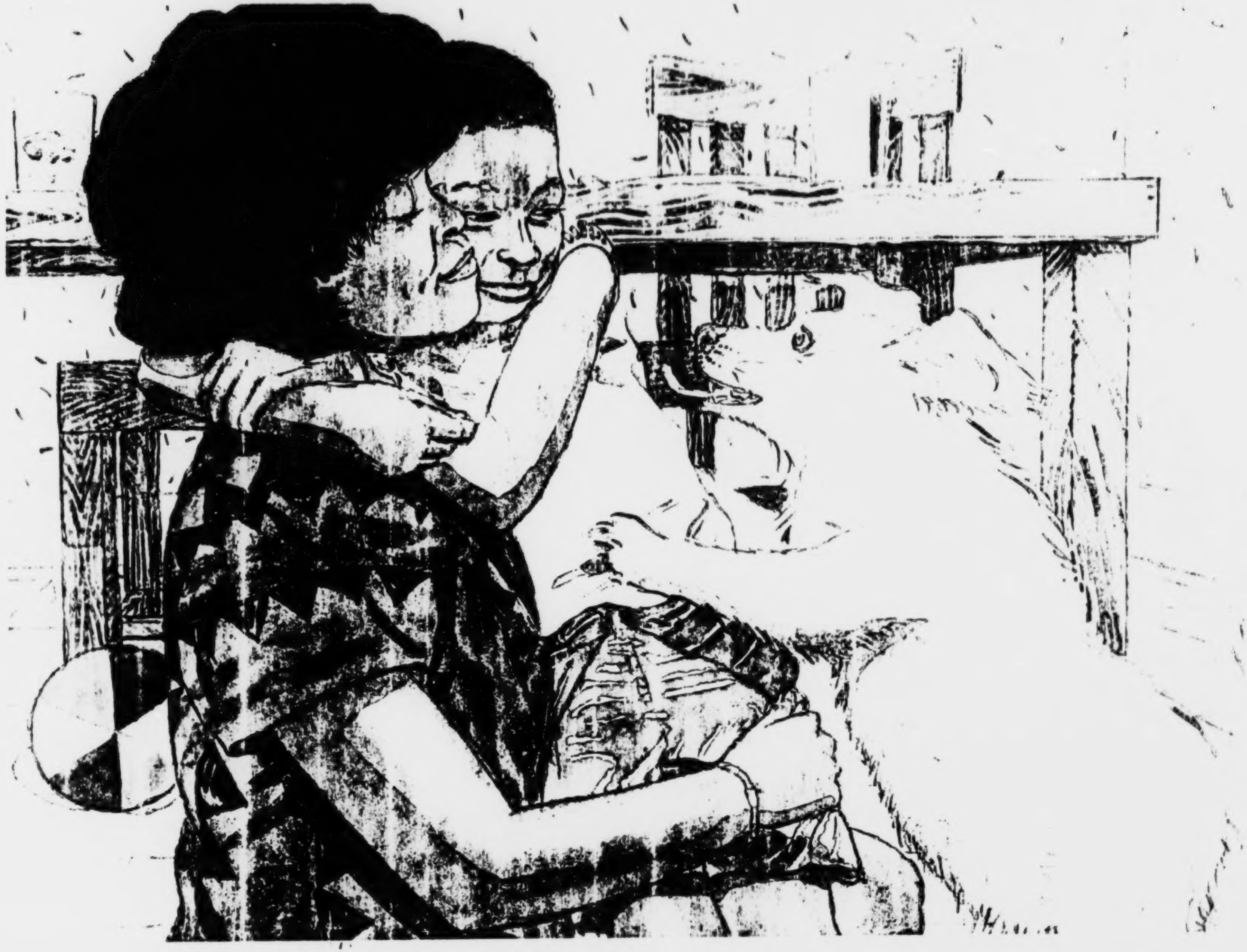
"The super magic isn't working," grumbled Timmy.
"Mighty Mutt is still just a plain old dog."
He put his blue cape away and curled up
on his bed, discouraged.



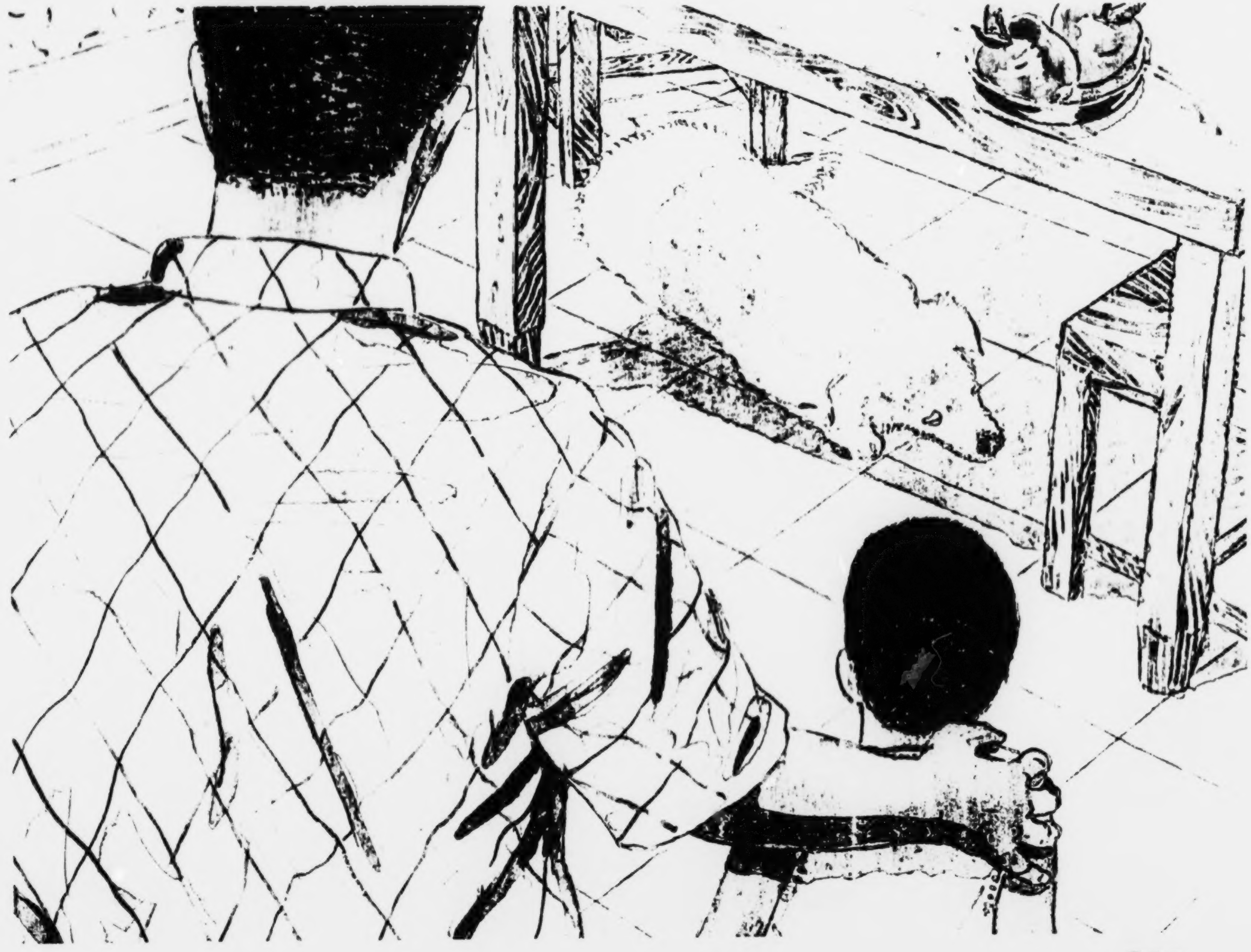
When it was time for lunch, Timmy wasn't very hungry. "Is something wrong?" asked his dad. "You're not eating much." Timmy told his parents what happened with Duke. "I wanted Super Duper Timmy Cooper to have a super sidekick," said Timmy, "but the magic didn't work."



*H*is mom gave him a hug. "Don't worry, Timmy," she said. "We know how much you want Duke to obey and do tricks, but magic isn't the answer. It wasn't the cape or secret words that made you Super Duper. It was lots of practice and hard work."



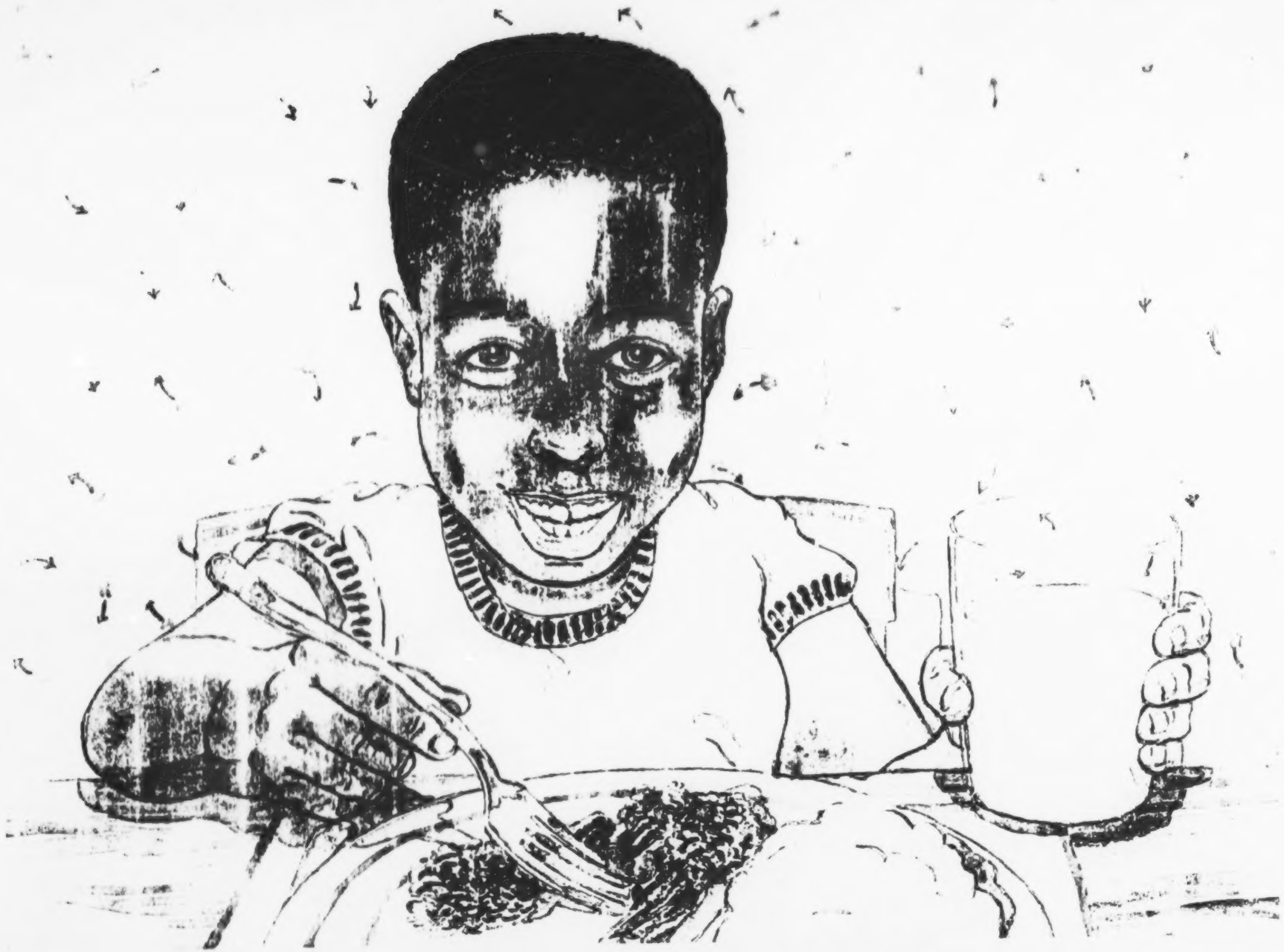
"*R*emember how many times we went to the park?" asked his dad. "It was a long time before you could climb to the top and hang from your knees and land without falling. Duke needs plenty of practice just like you did. Let's work together with him starting this afternoon."



*T*immy smiled at his mom and dad.

"In a minute," he said. "First I have to eat my lunch."

THE END



Super Duper Timmy Cooper

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Illustrator's Models

- Alex Ogilvie
- Brandon Ogilvie
- Sheila Ogilvie

*U.S. G.P.O.:1995-381-638

Building Blocks: Helping Preschoolers Grow Up Alcohol and Drug Free

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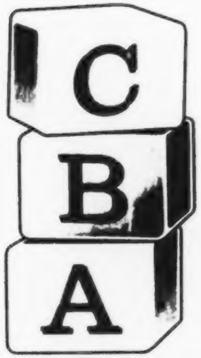
I'm Such a Big Help!

A Building Blocks Picture Book for Four-Year-Olds



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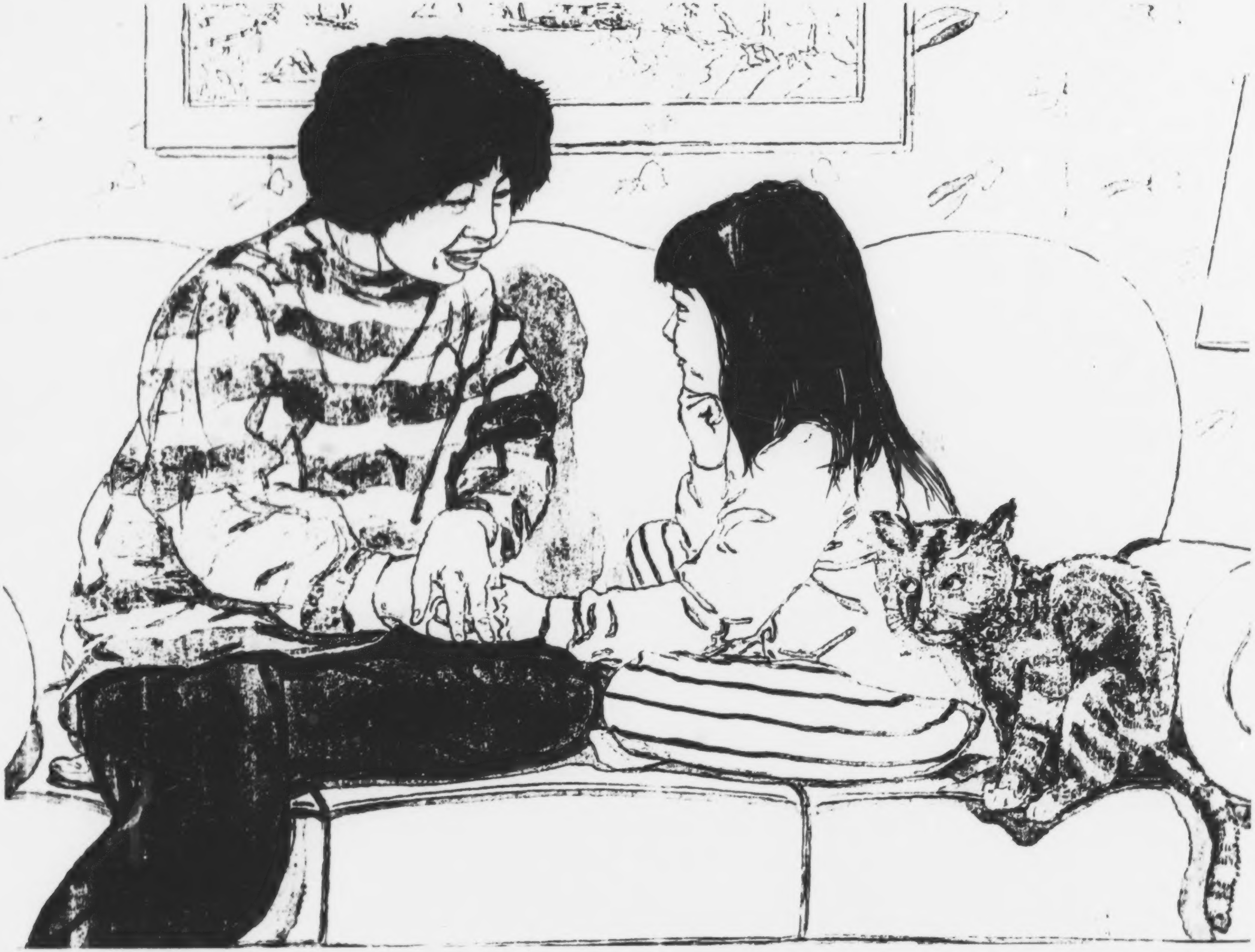
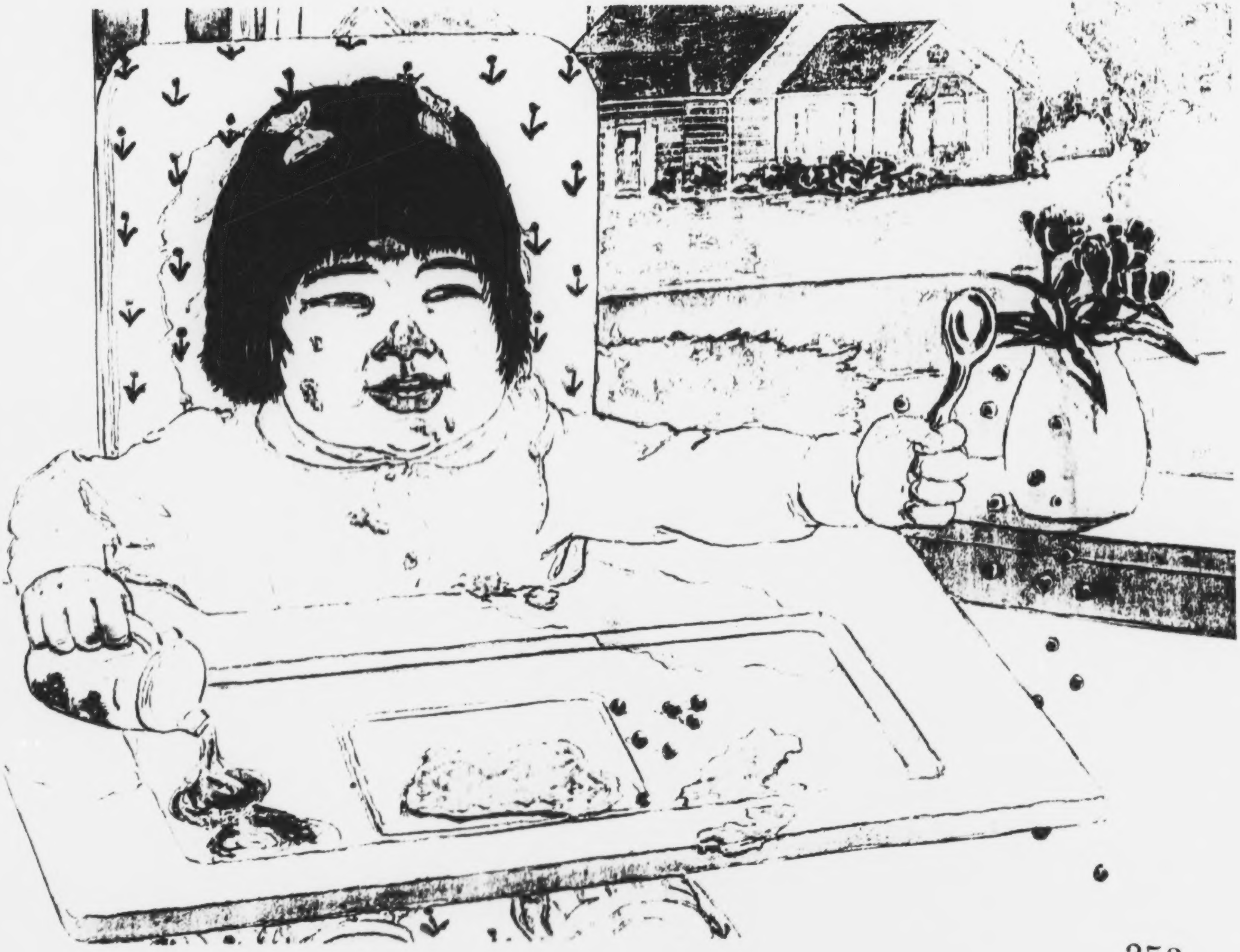
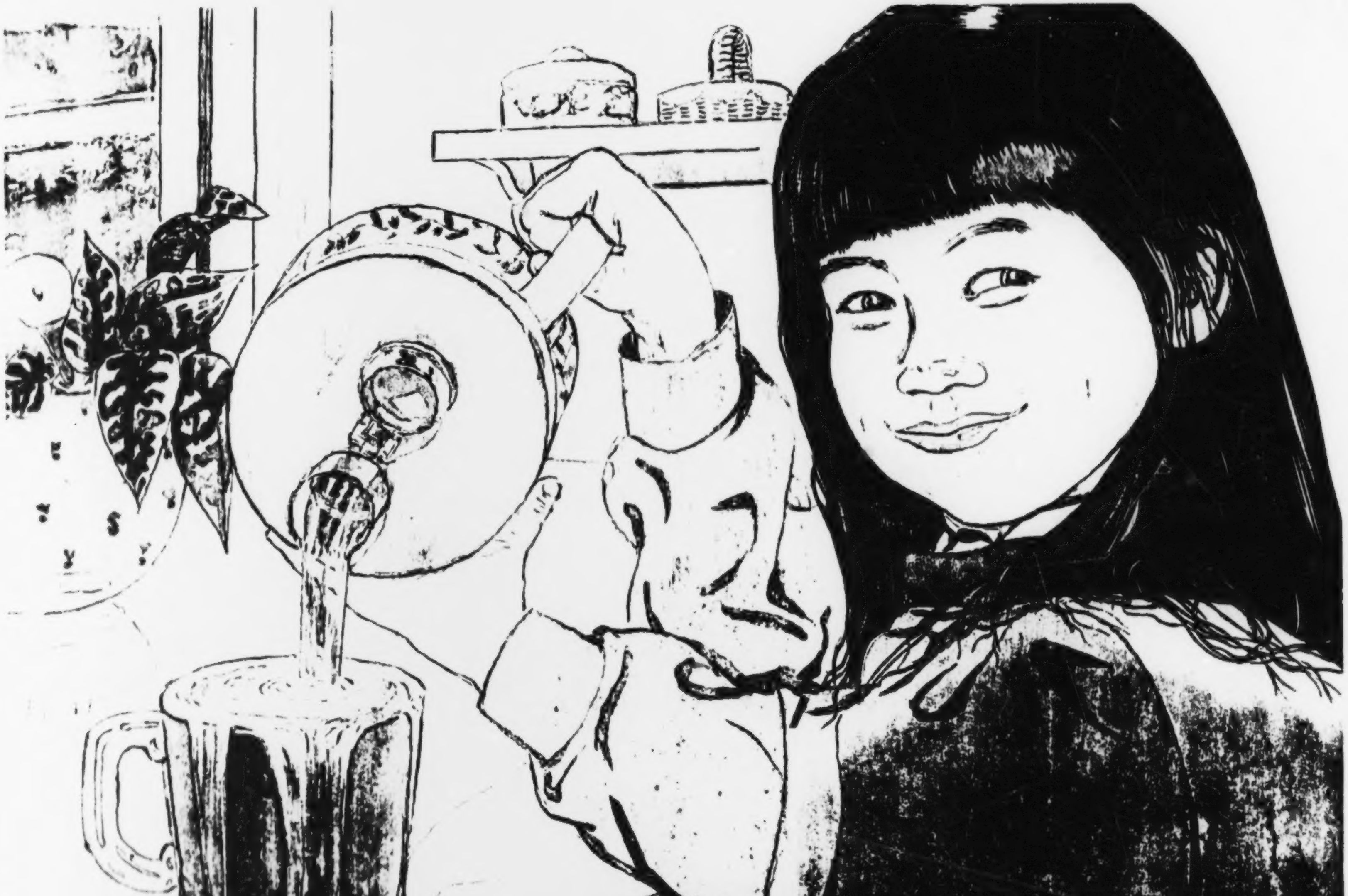
*M*y name is Jennifer Han. My mother says I have been a big help for as long as she can remember.



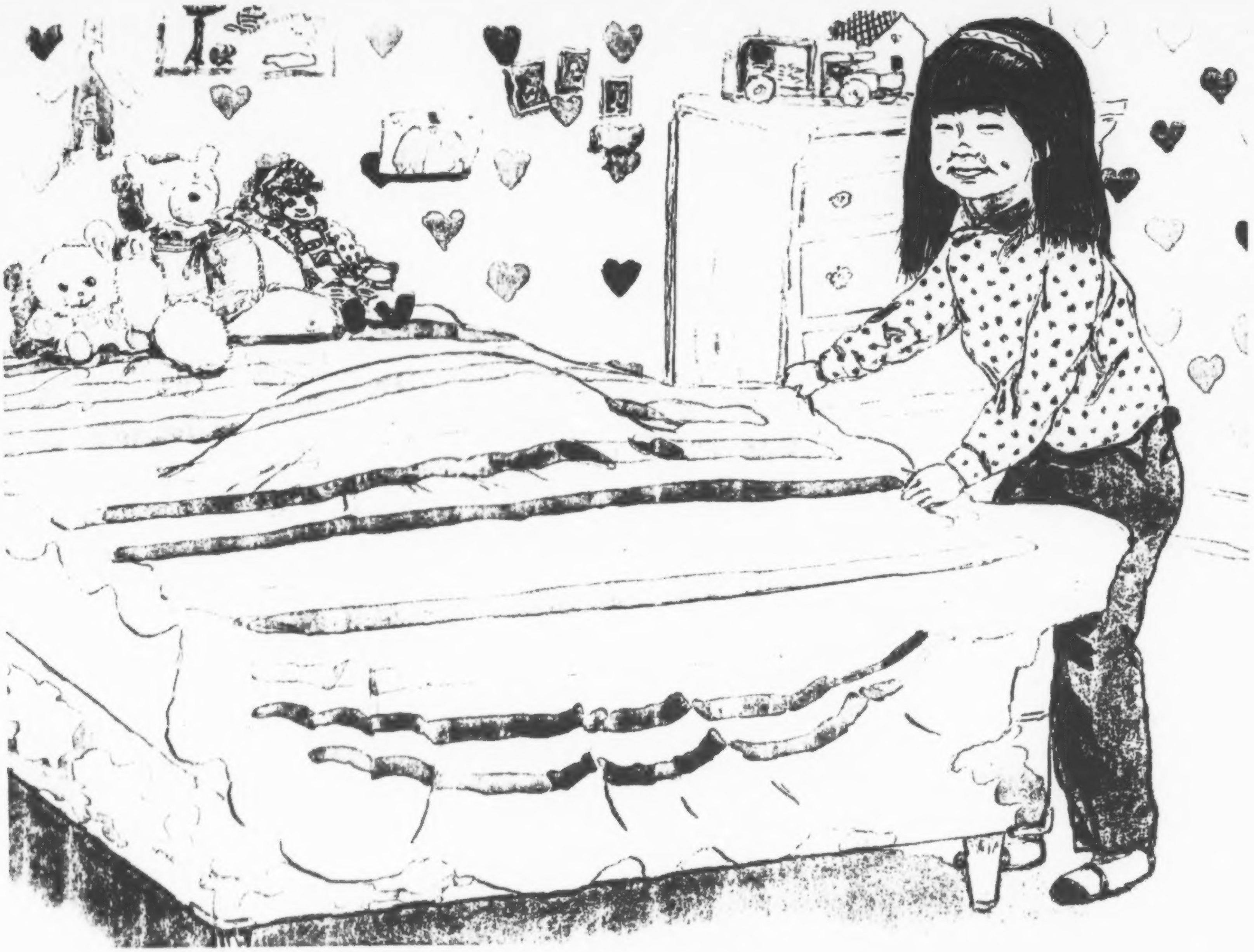
Even when I was a baby, I helped
her out by feeding myself.



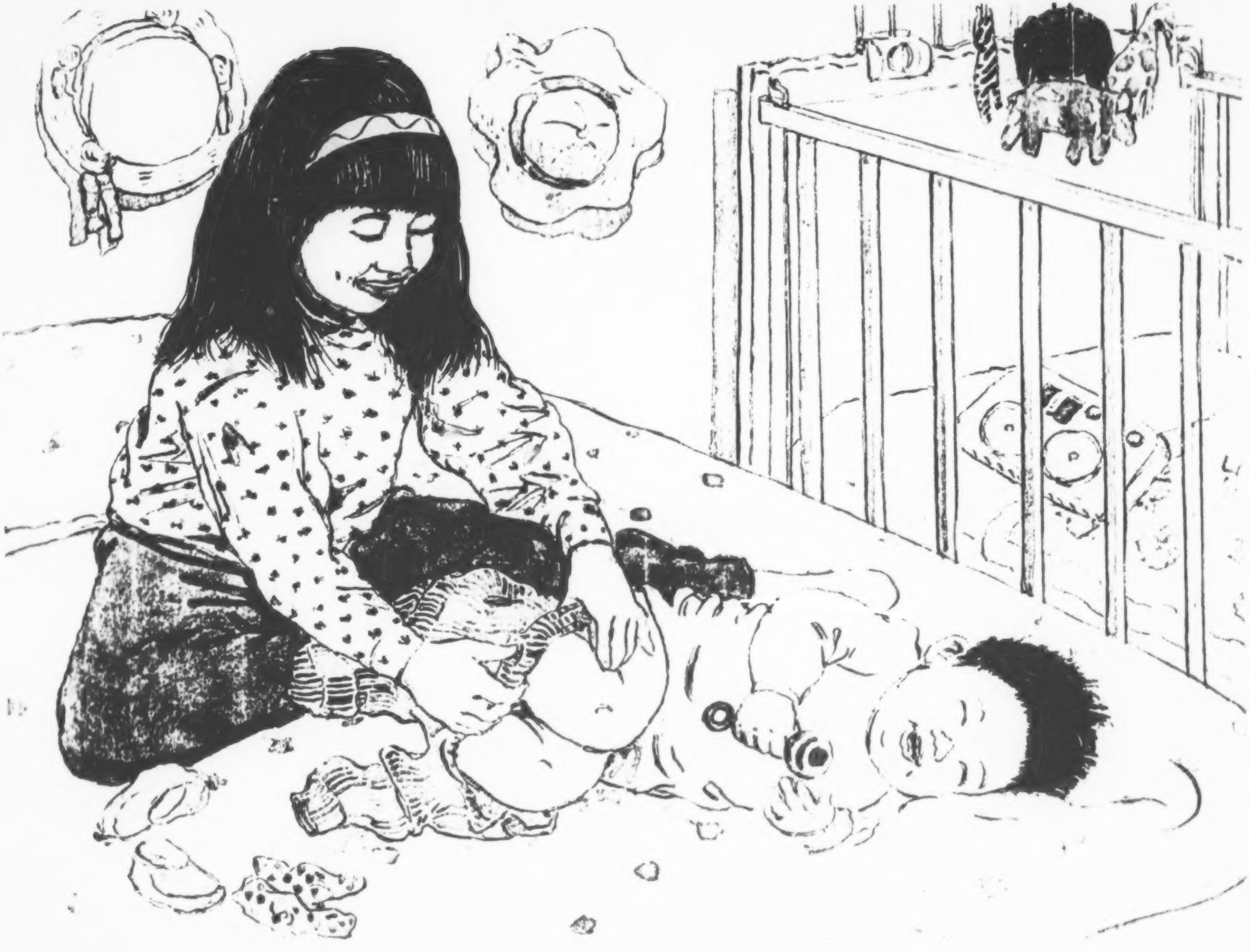
*N*ow that I am four years old, I can help others too.
This morning when Dad was getting breakfast,
I surprised him by pouring the juice.
Dad said, "It is a good thing we have lots more juice in the pantry."
Then he told me that tomorrow I can use a smaller pitcher.



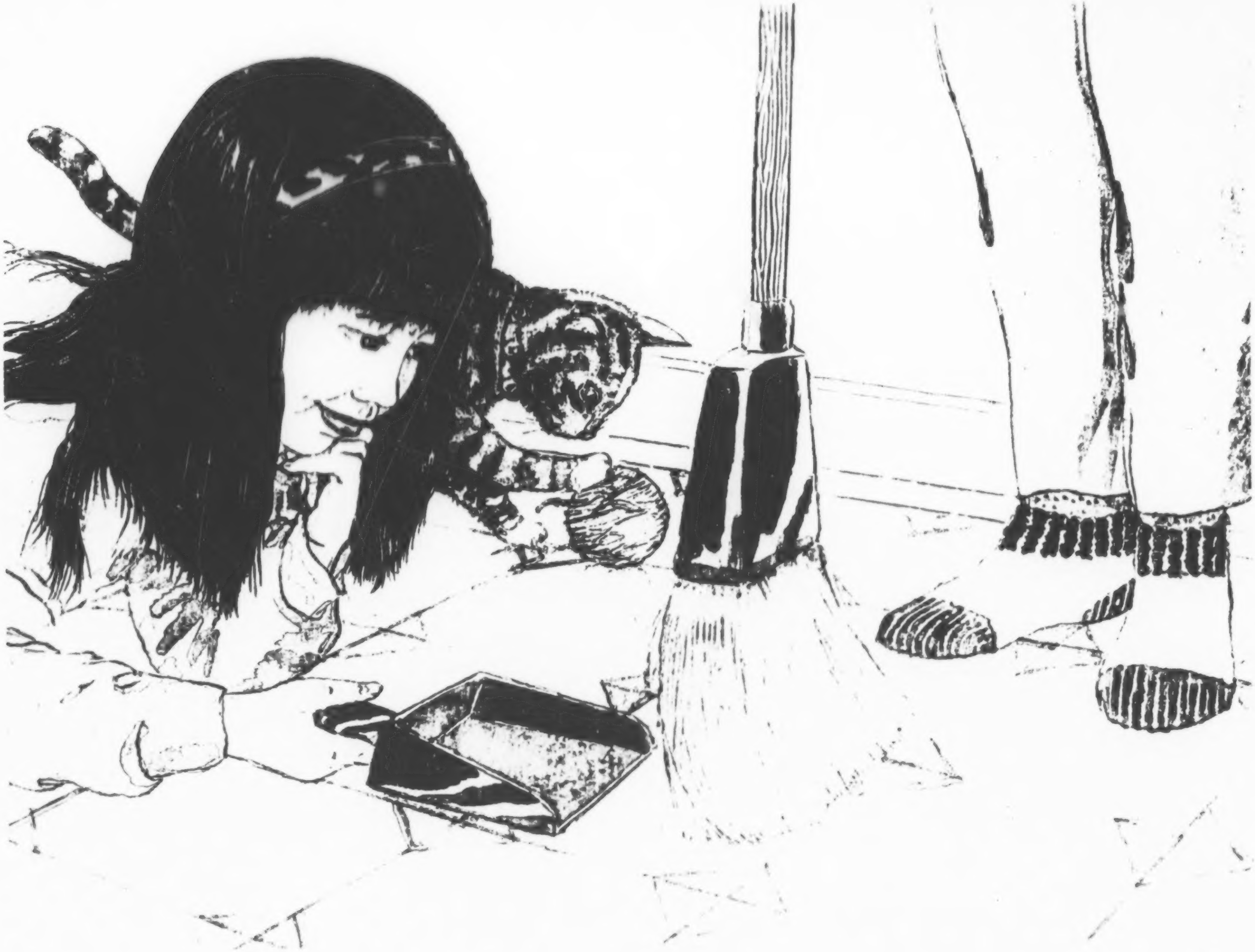
I always remember to make my bed,
even without Mom reminding me.
But Mom reminds me that my pillow would look better
at the top of my bed, next to Snuggle Bear.



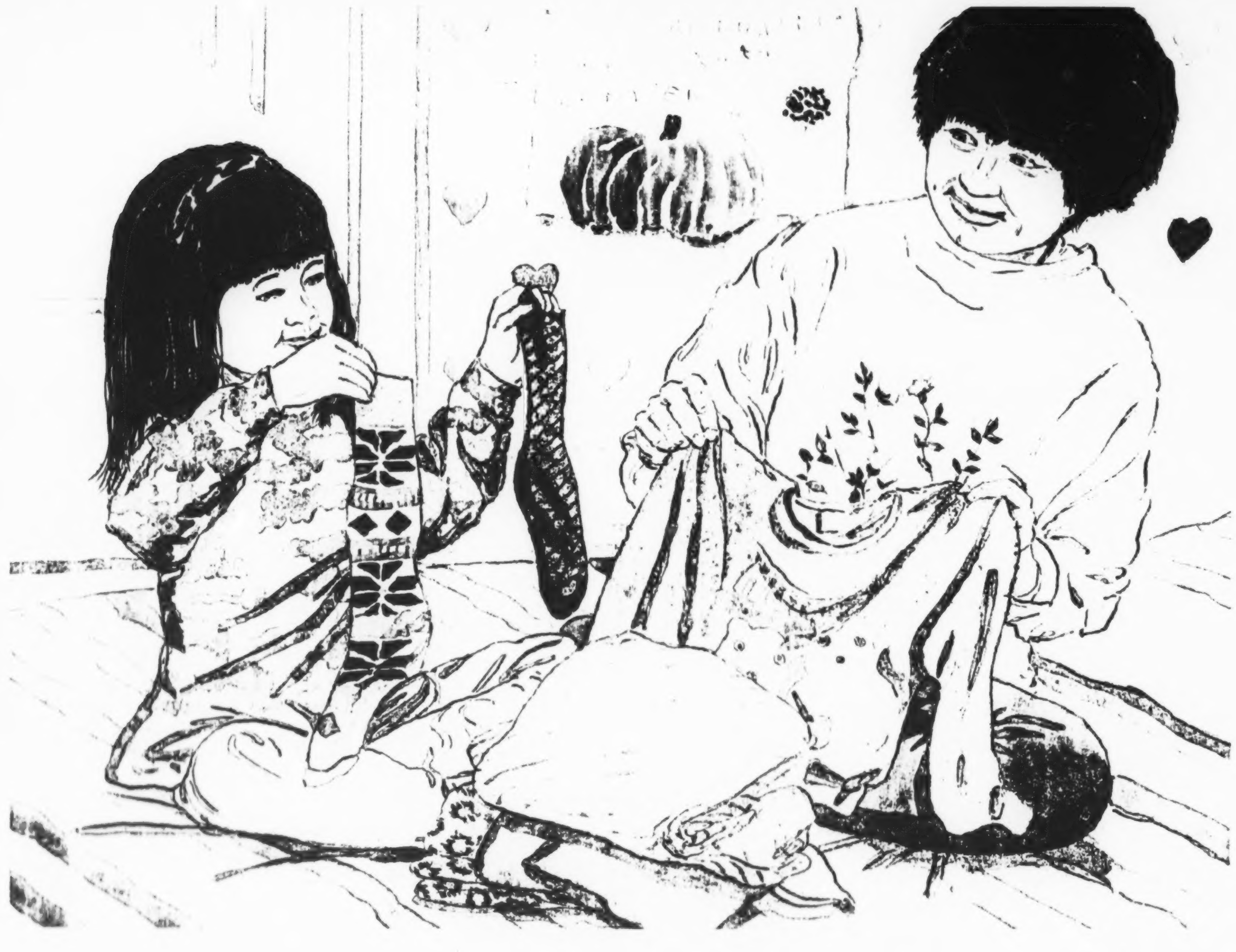
I just love to dress my baby sister. She loves it, too! Some of her clothes are pretty tight, but when she wiggles and I squeeze, they fit just fine.



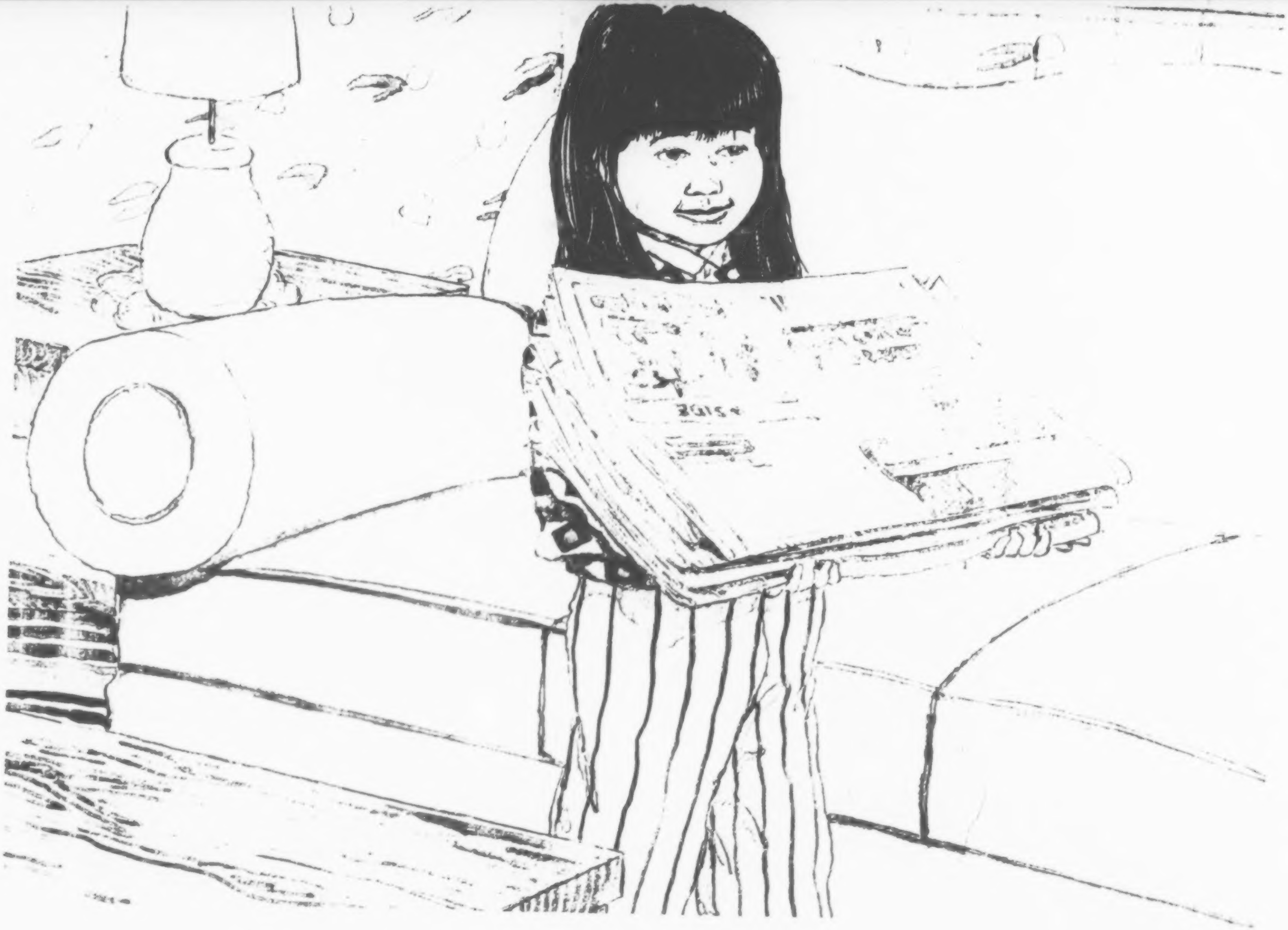
Sweeping the floor is a big job for Mom,
so I like to help her out.
When we work together, the job goes faster.



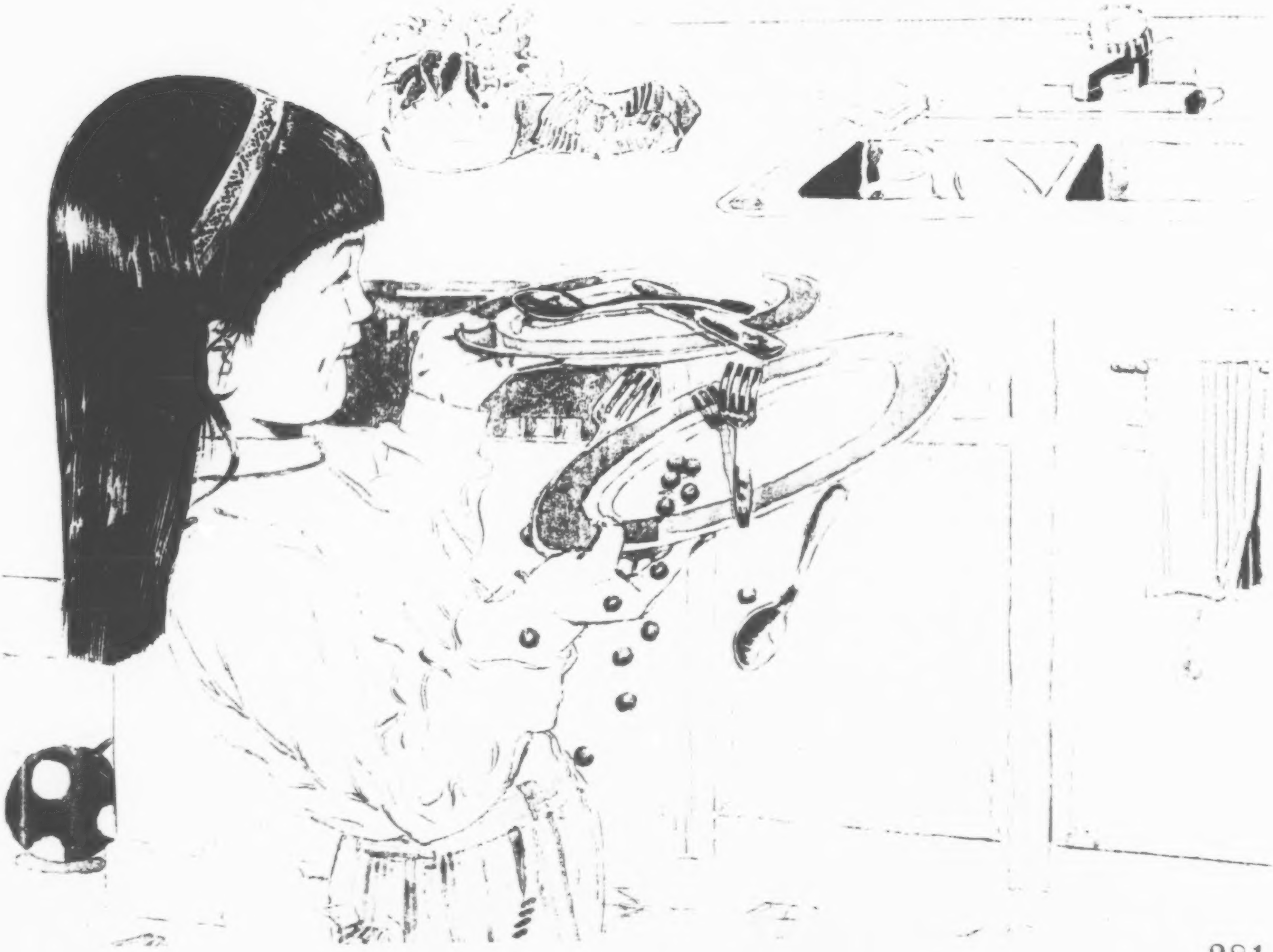
I also help Mom sort the laundry.
My job is putting the socks together.
"Rainbows are beautiful, Jennifer," says Mom,
"but they look better in the sky than on your feet.
We will work together to match up the colors."



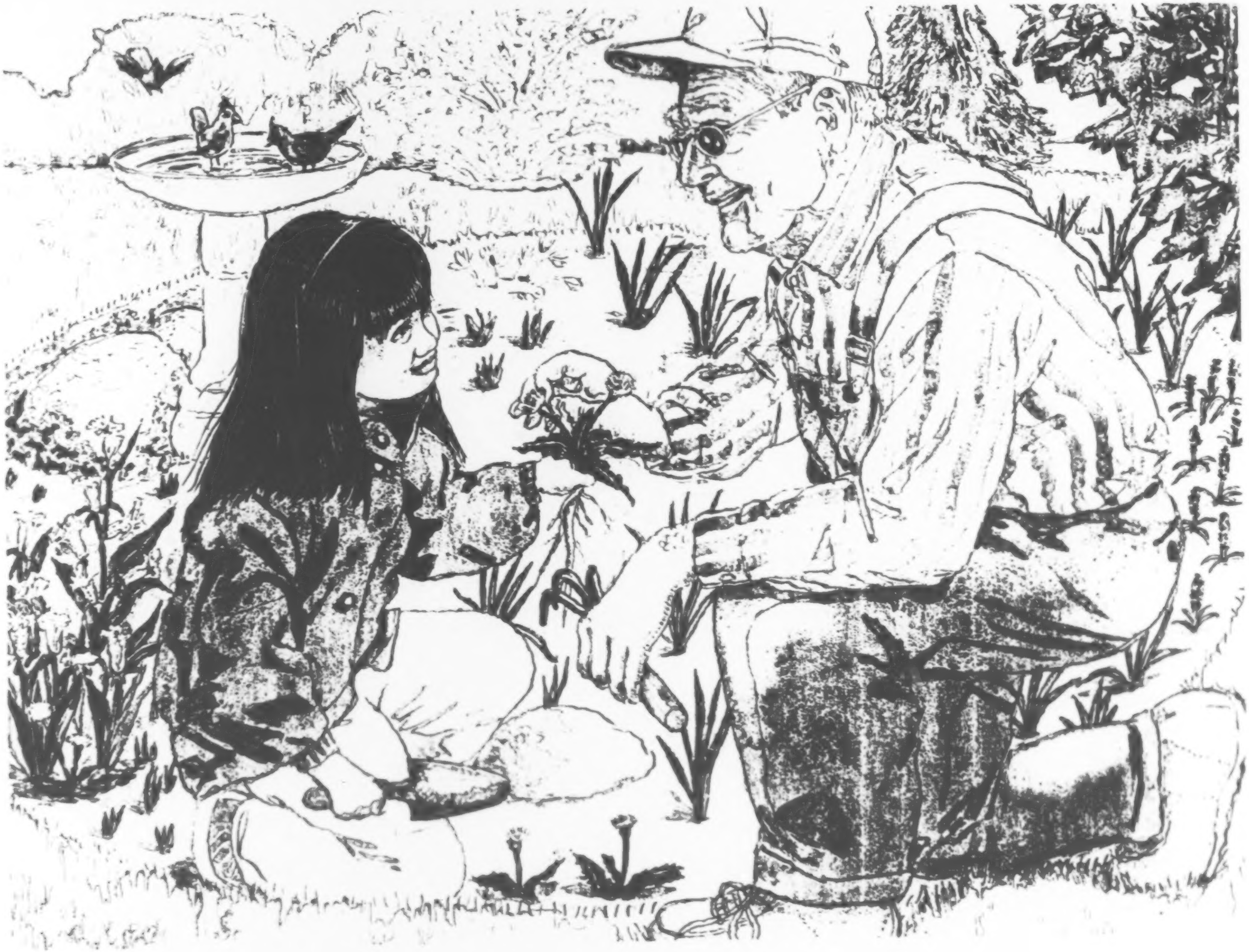
In our house, we read a lot of newspapers and
I help recycle them.
I am pretty strong, so the pile is not as heavy as it looks.



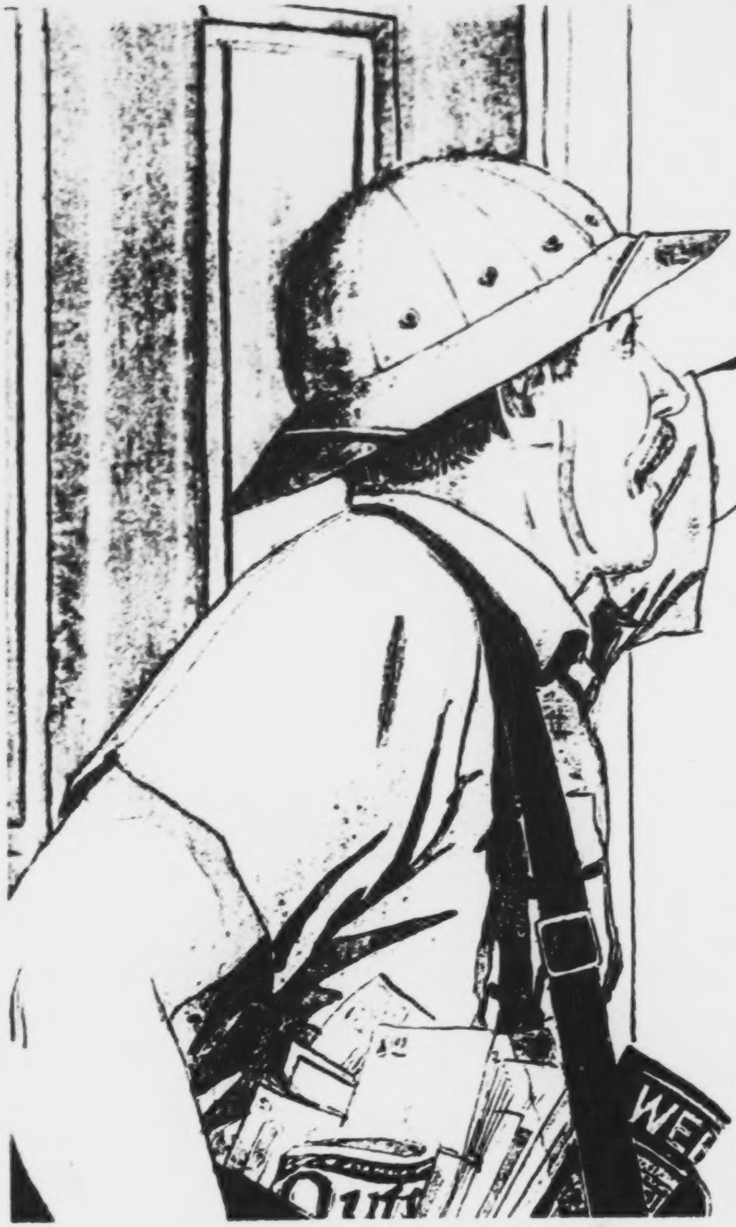
Every night after dinner, I clear the dishes from the table. Mom and Dad say I am the hardest worker they know. But they say my job will be lots easier if I carry the dishes one at a time.

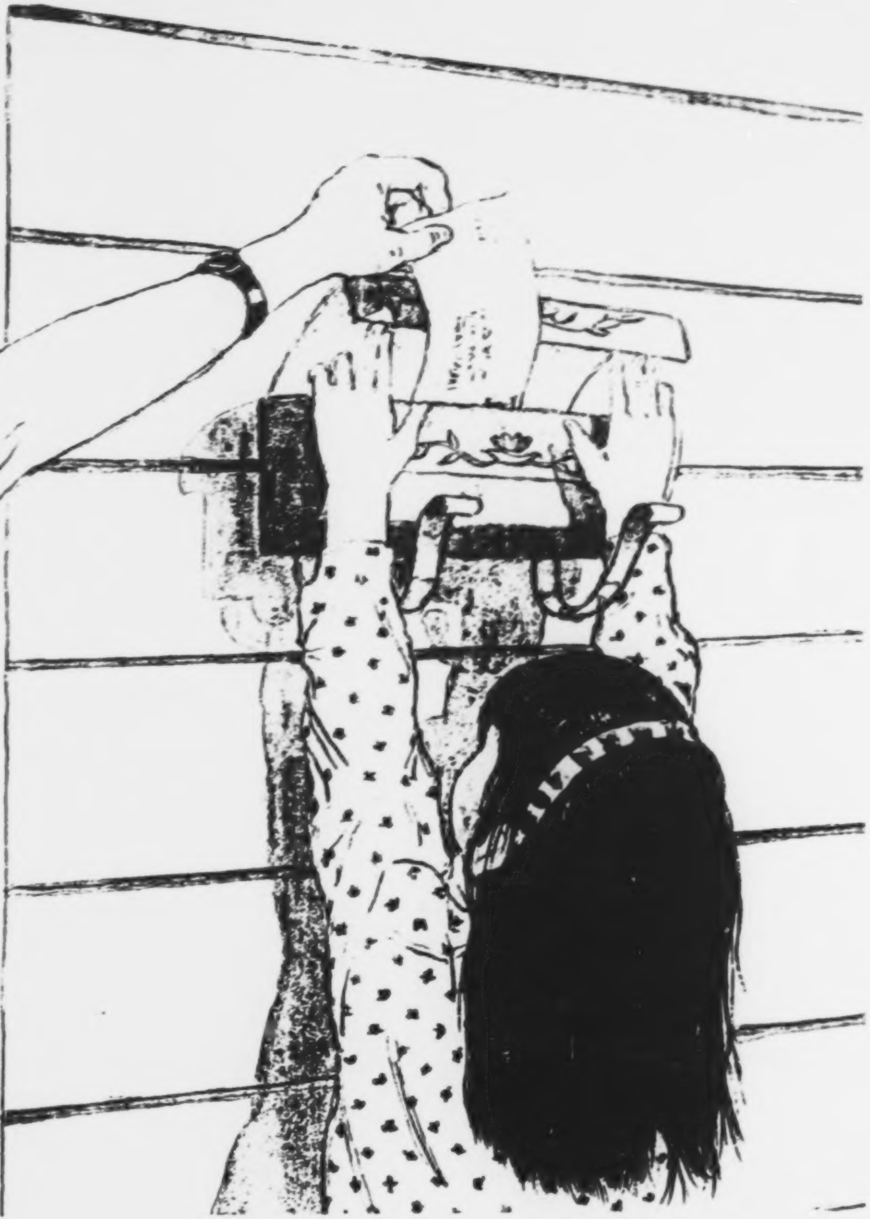


*M*r. Dillon, who lives down the street,
is always happy to see me because I help him weed his garden.
"Jennifer," he says, "as long as you are around,
I never have to worry about crowded plants!"
Yesterday, he helped me see the difference between
a flower and a weed. Now I can help him even more.

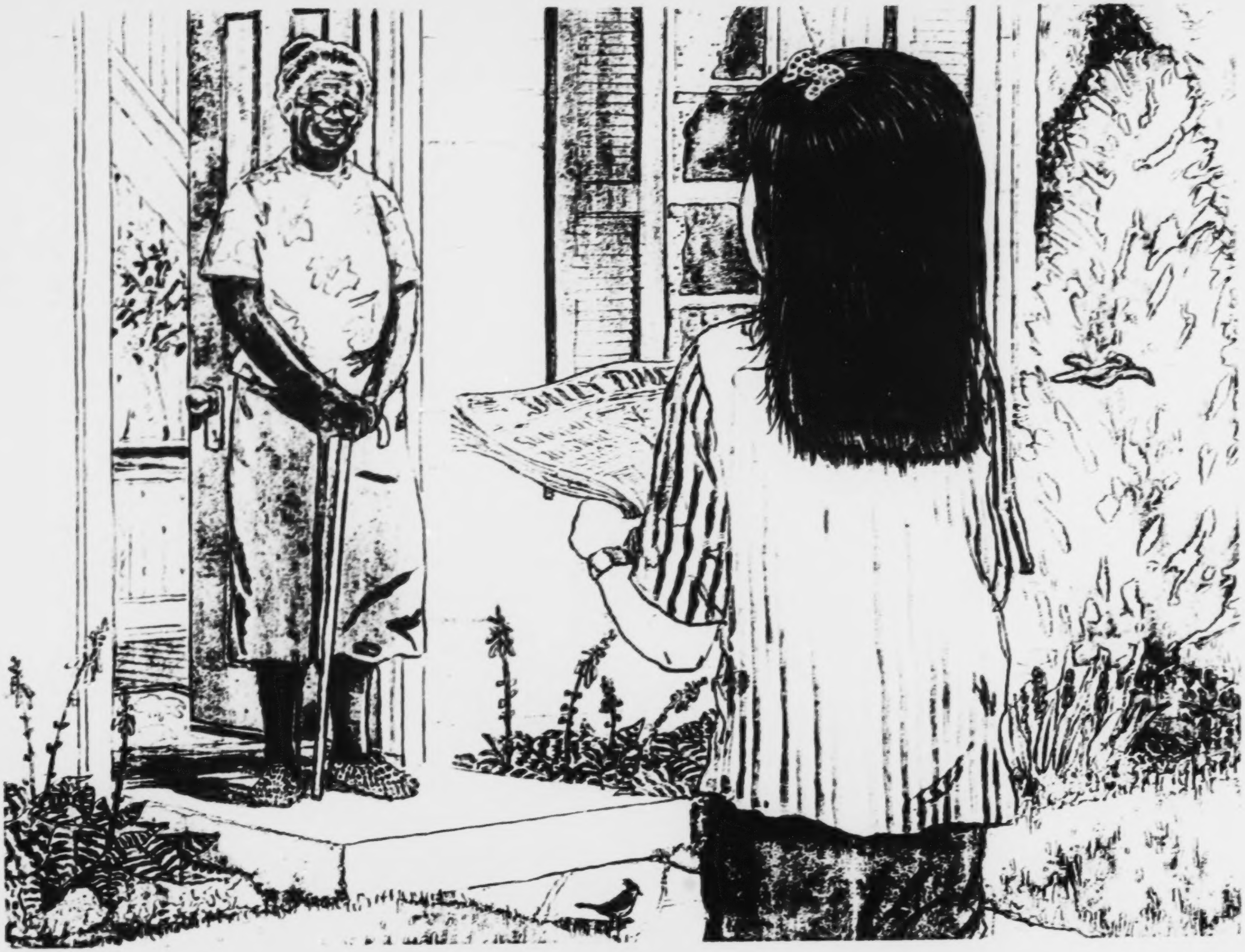


When Mr. Harrison comes at 3 o'clock,
I hold the mailbox open so he can deliver the letters faster.
Mr. Harrison says he works better when I help him.

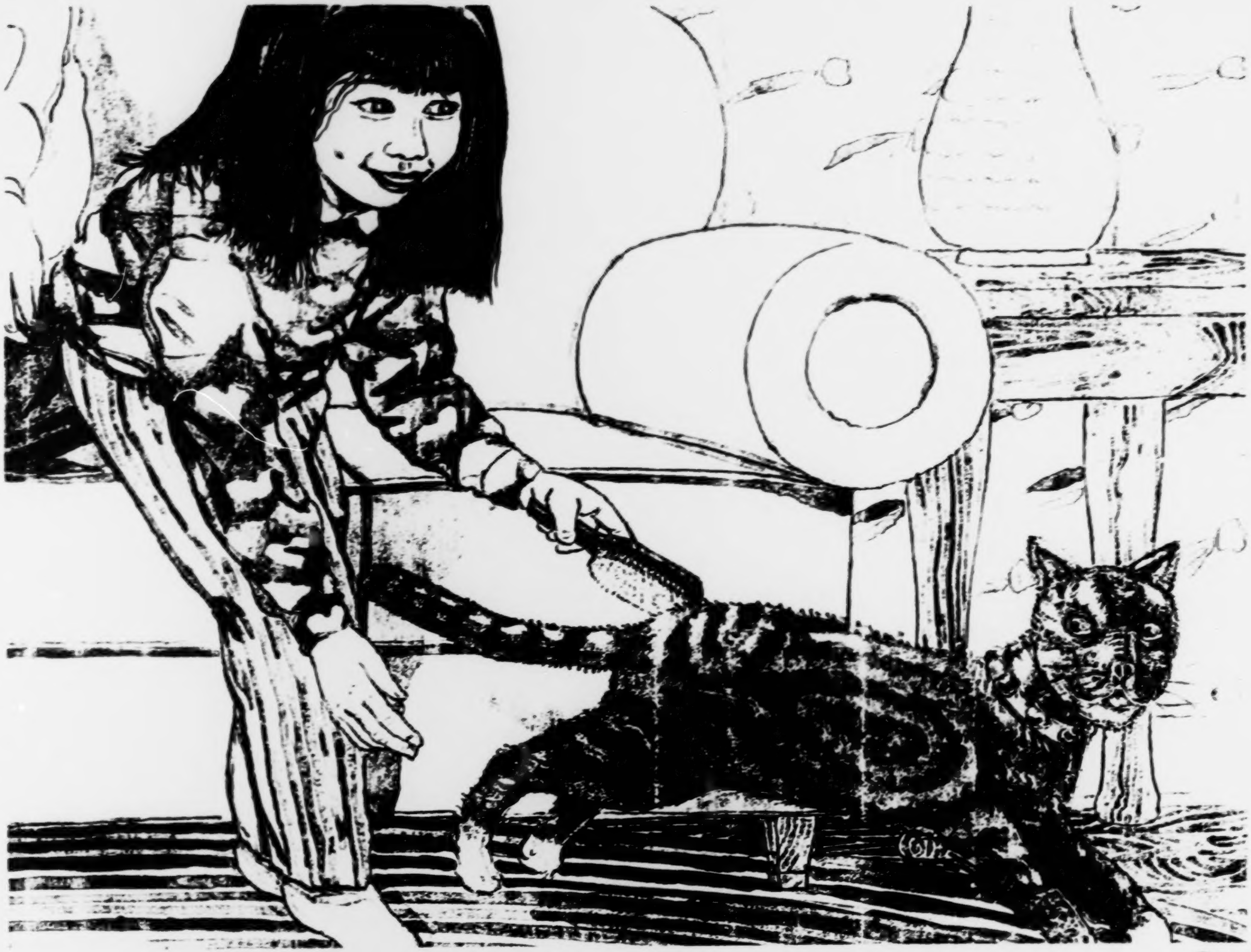




My next-door neighbor, Mrs. Williams, really needs my help. Ever since she sprained her ankle, I have brought her the afternoon paper. "Jennifer," she says, "I just could not manage without you."

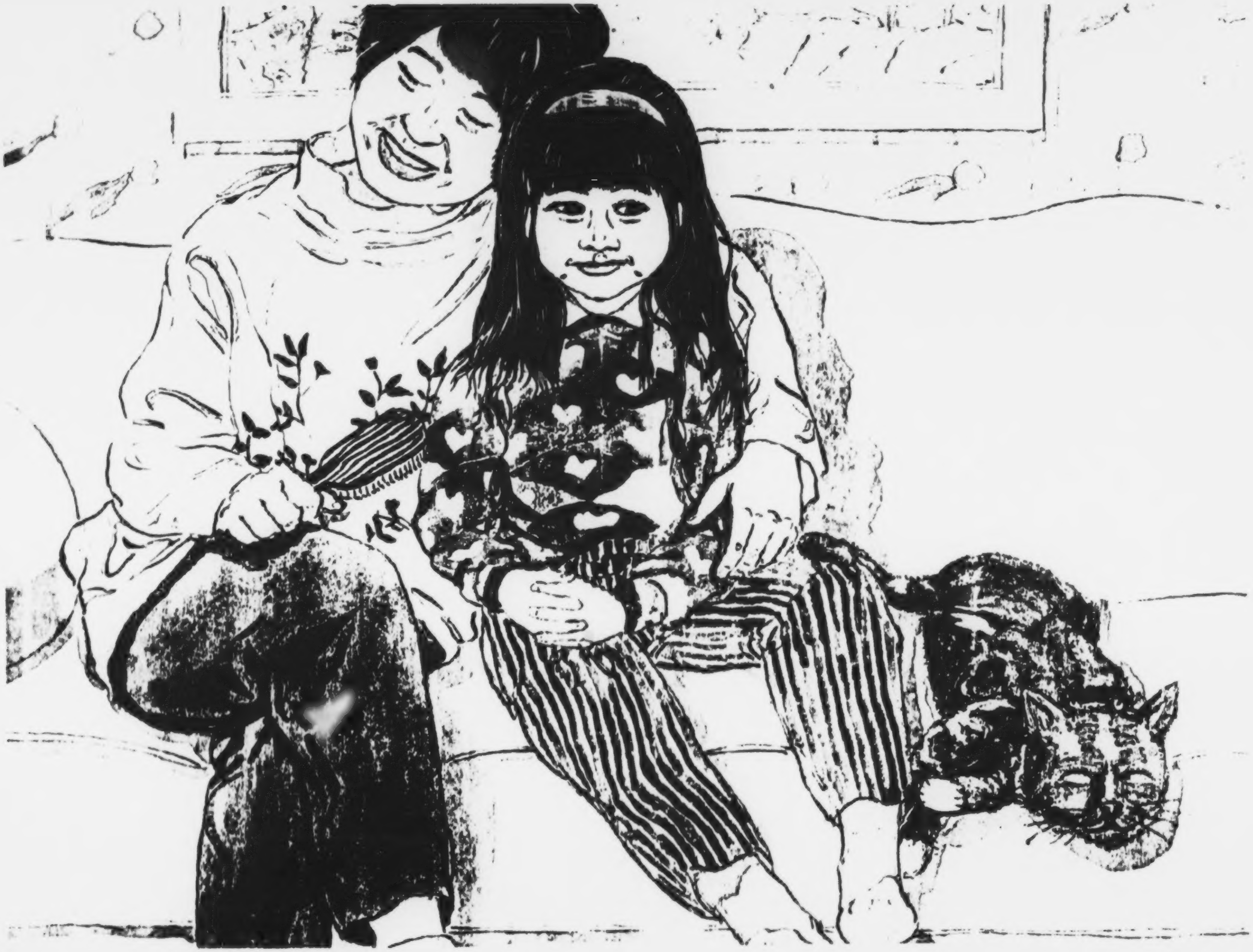

DAILY TIME

My cat needs my help, too. I know that Sneakers just loves it when I brush his fur. We even play a game where he makes me catch him first.



*M*y Mom says I am such a big help she cannot believe it.
But if she thinks I help her a lot now,
just wait until I turn five!

THE END



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Illustrator's Models

- Annie Jeng
- Karen Jeng
- Shwu-Ching Jeng

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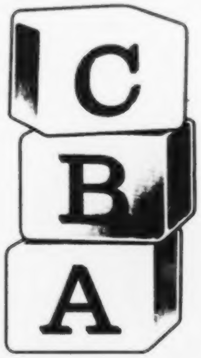

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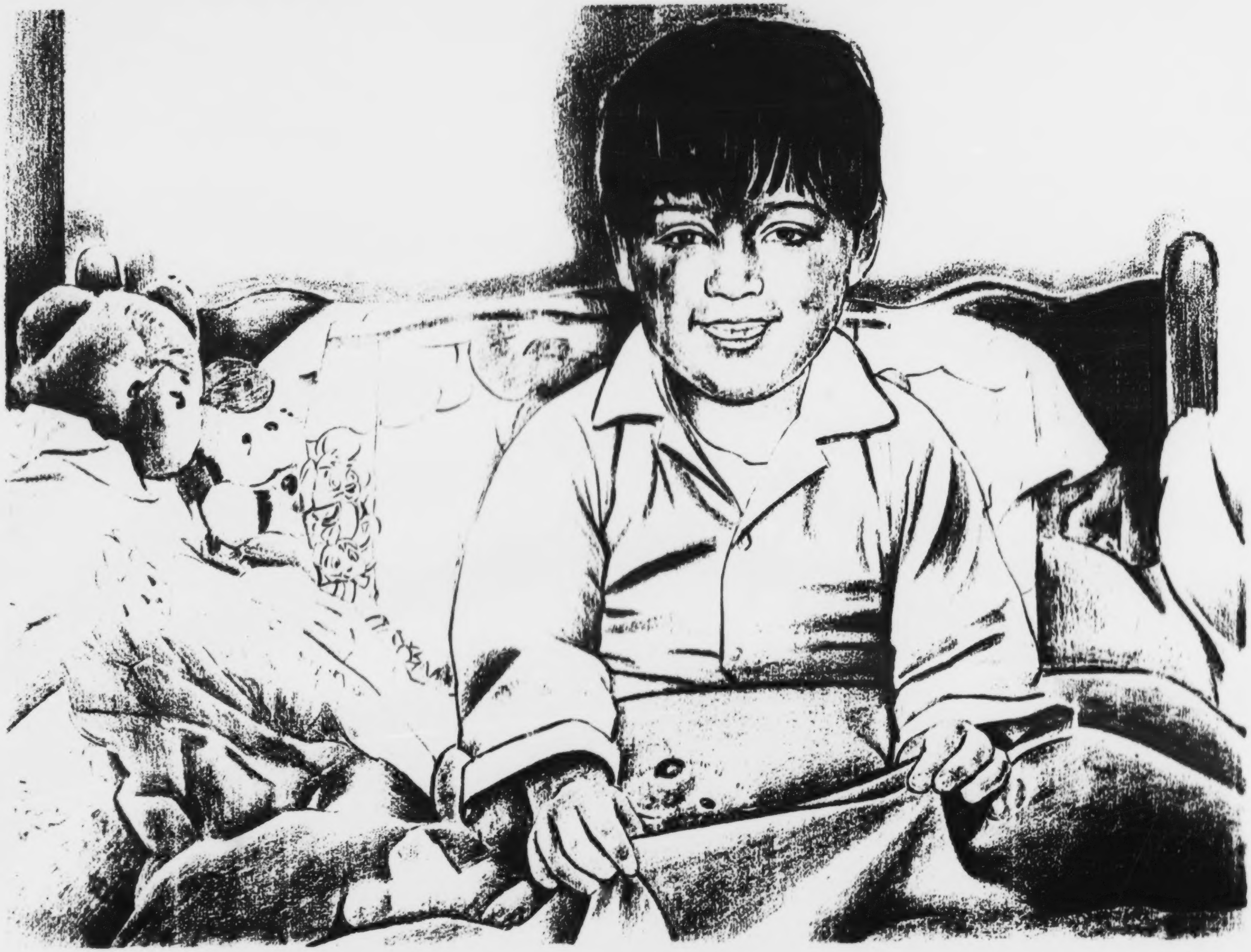
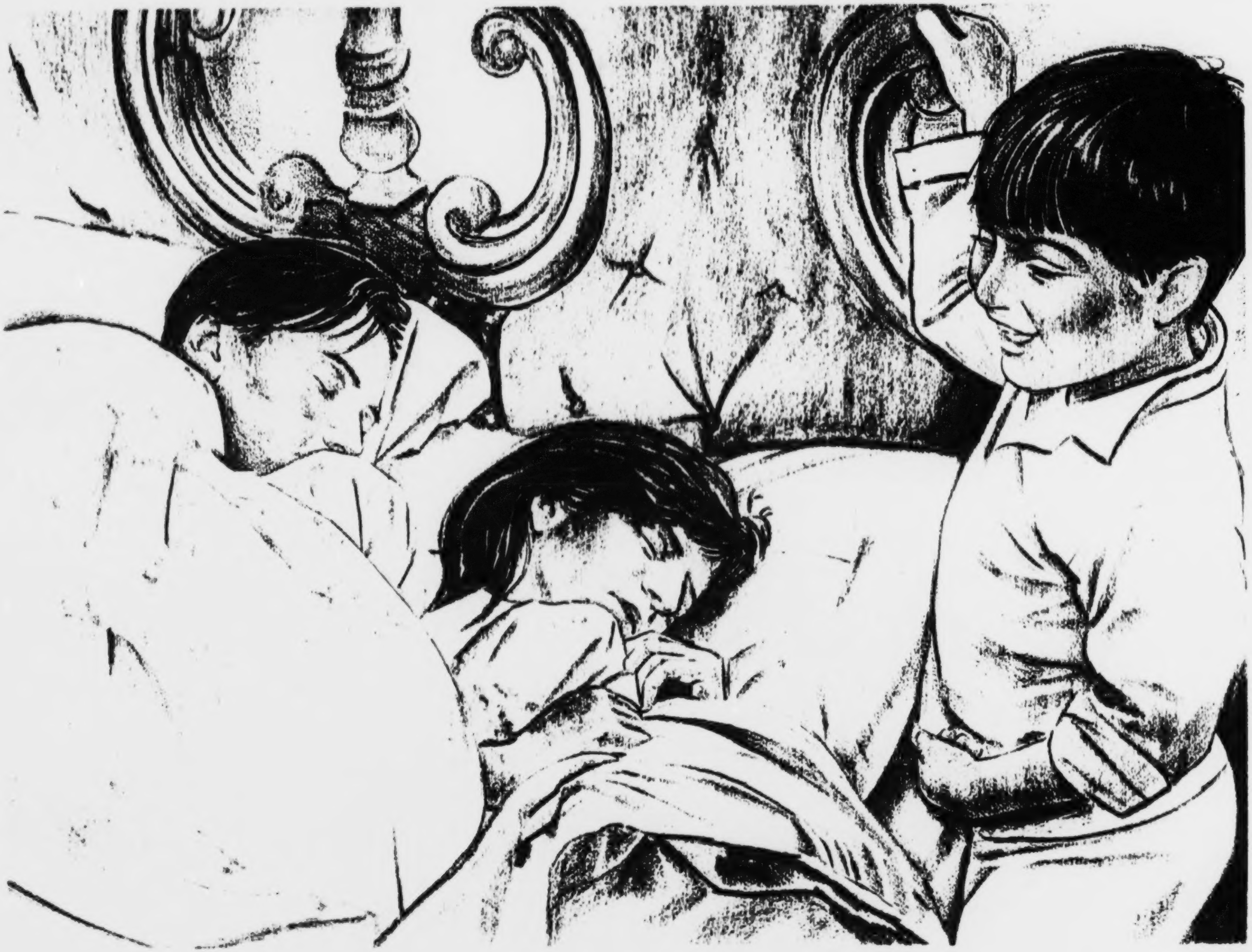
One quiet morning in Apartment 5B,
Luis García woke up with a great idea.
"I've got to tell Mamá and Papá what
I've been thinking," he said to himself.



Luis walked quietly into his parents' bedroom. "Mamá! Papá!" he called softly to his sleeping parents. Mamá and Papá did not move. "Mamá! Papá!" he said in a louder voice. Mamá and Papá still didn't move. "Mamá! Papá!" Luis yelled as loudly as he could.

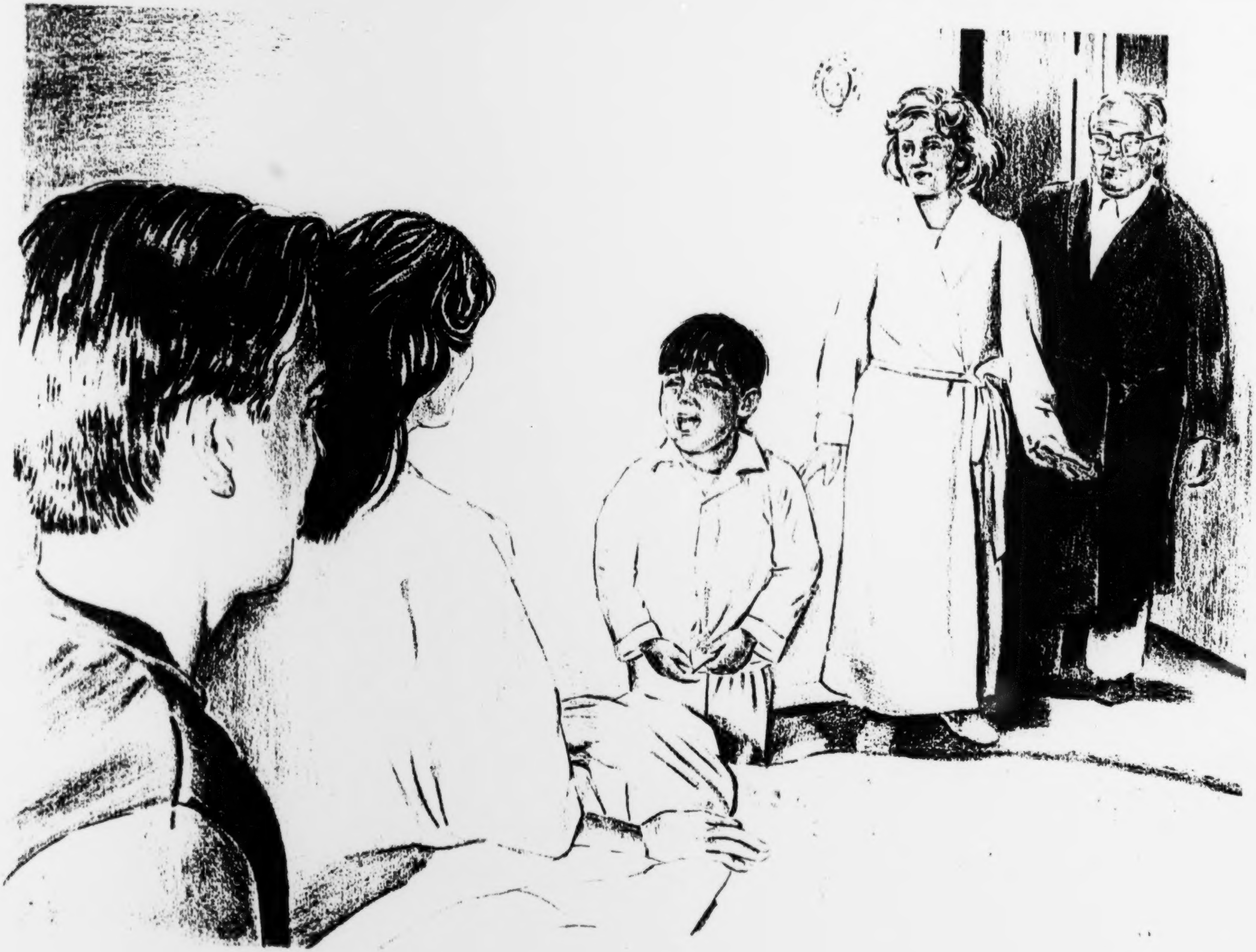


"What's wrong?" asked Mamá.

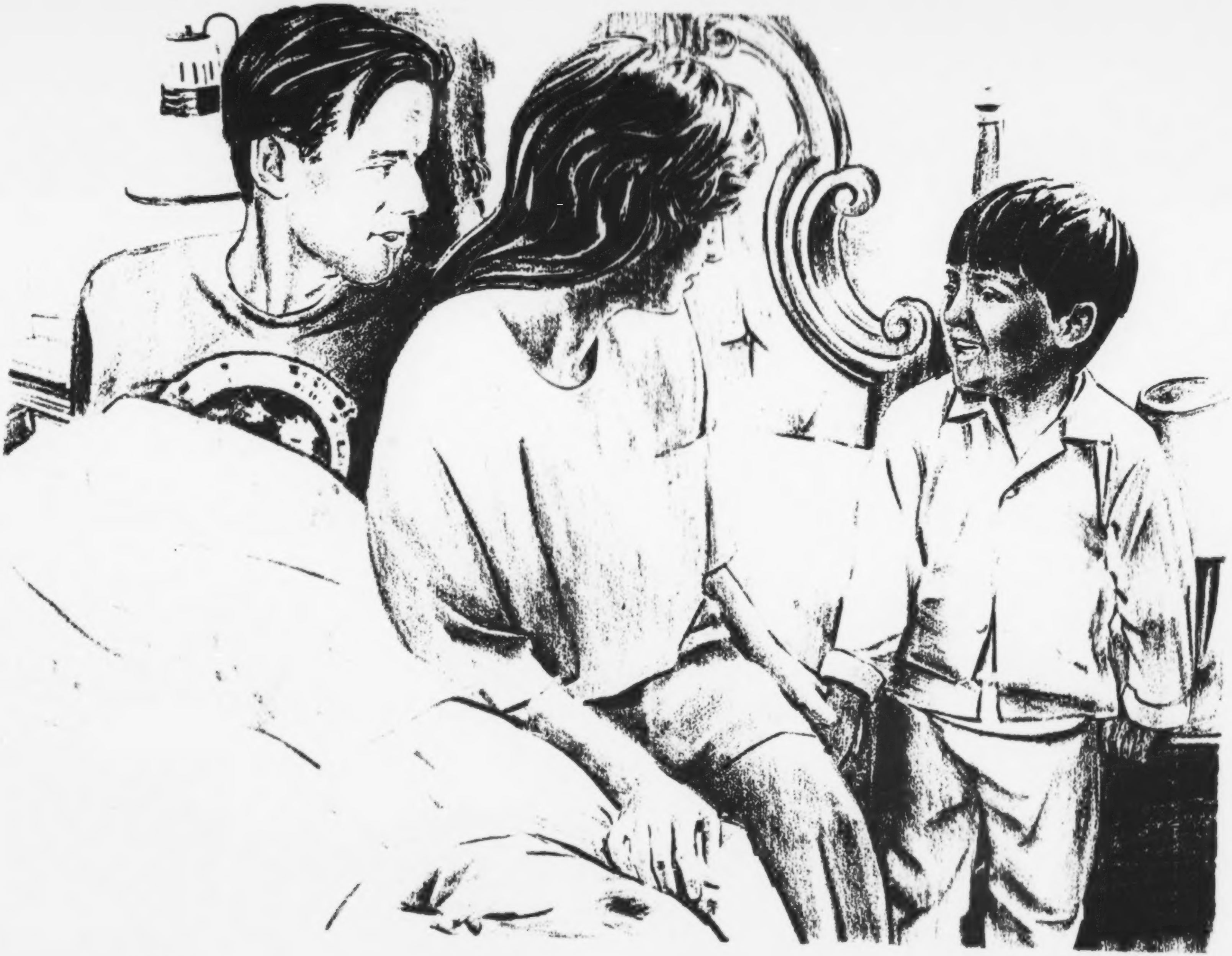
"¿Qué pasa?" asked Papá.

"What's going on?" called Tía Lucia from down the hall.

"Is someone hurt?" asked Luis's abuelo, Papá Grande, as he walked toward them.

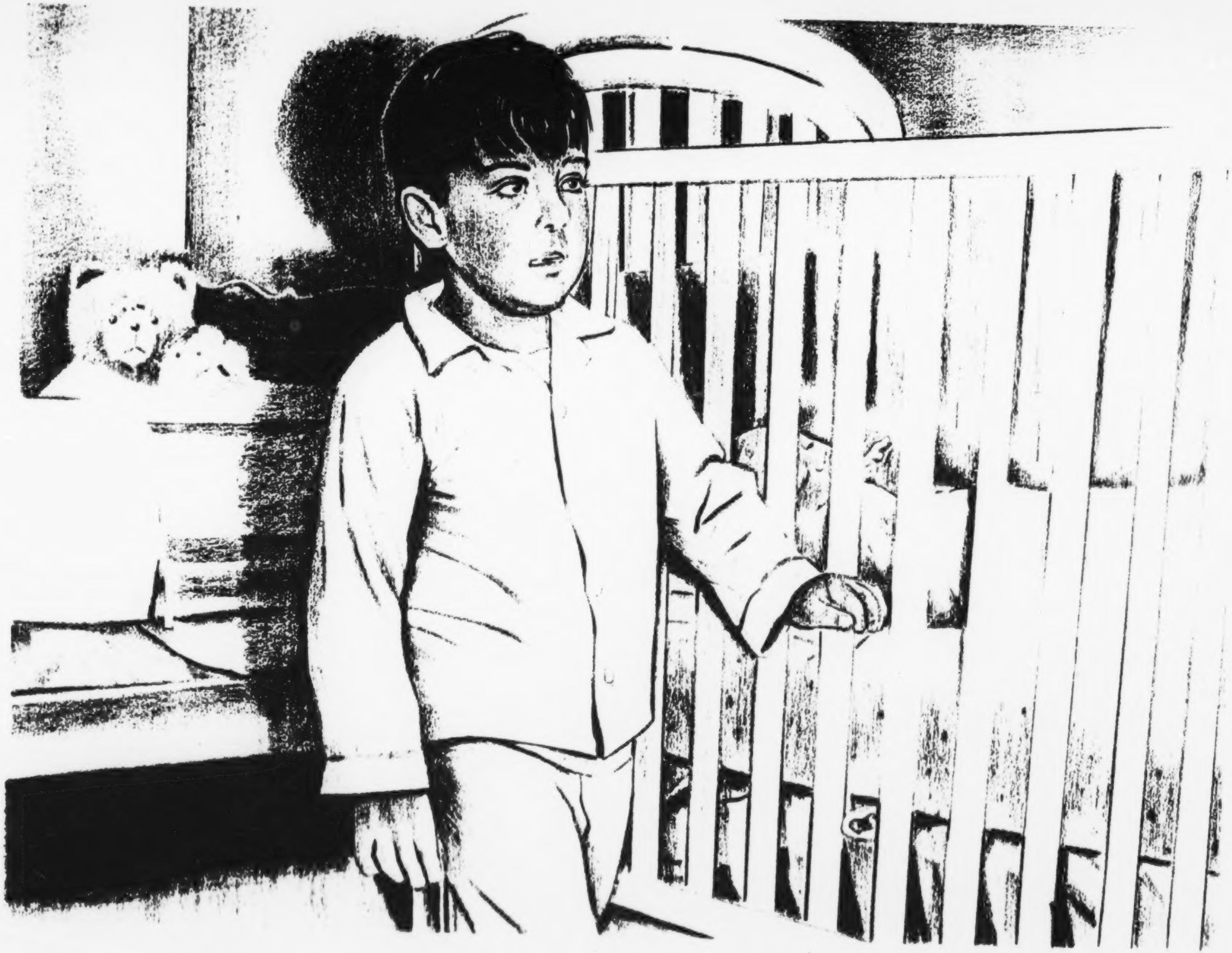


"No one's hurt," said Luis to his grandfather. "I just wanted to tell Mamá and Papá about the five steps."



"¿Cinco?" asked Tía Lucia as everyone settled on the bed. "Sí," answered Luis. "There are five steps I need to follow so I can get ready for school."

"Step 1 is the hardest," began Luis. "I have to get out of the bedroom without waking Carlos. If I don't tiptoe out the door, he will start crying."



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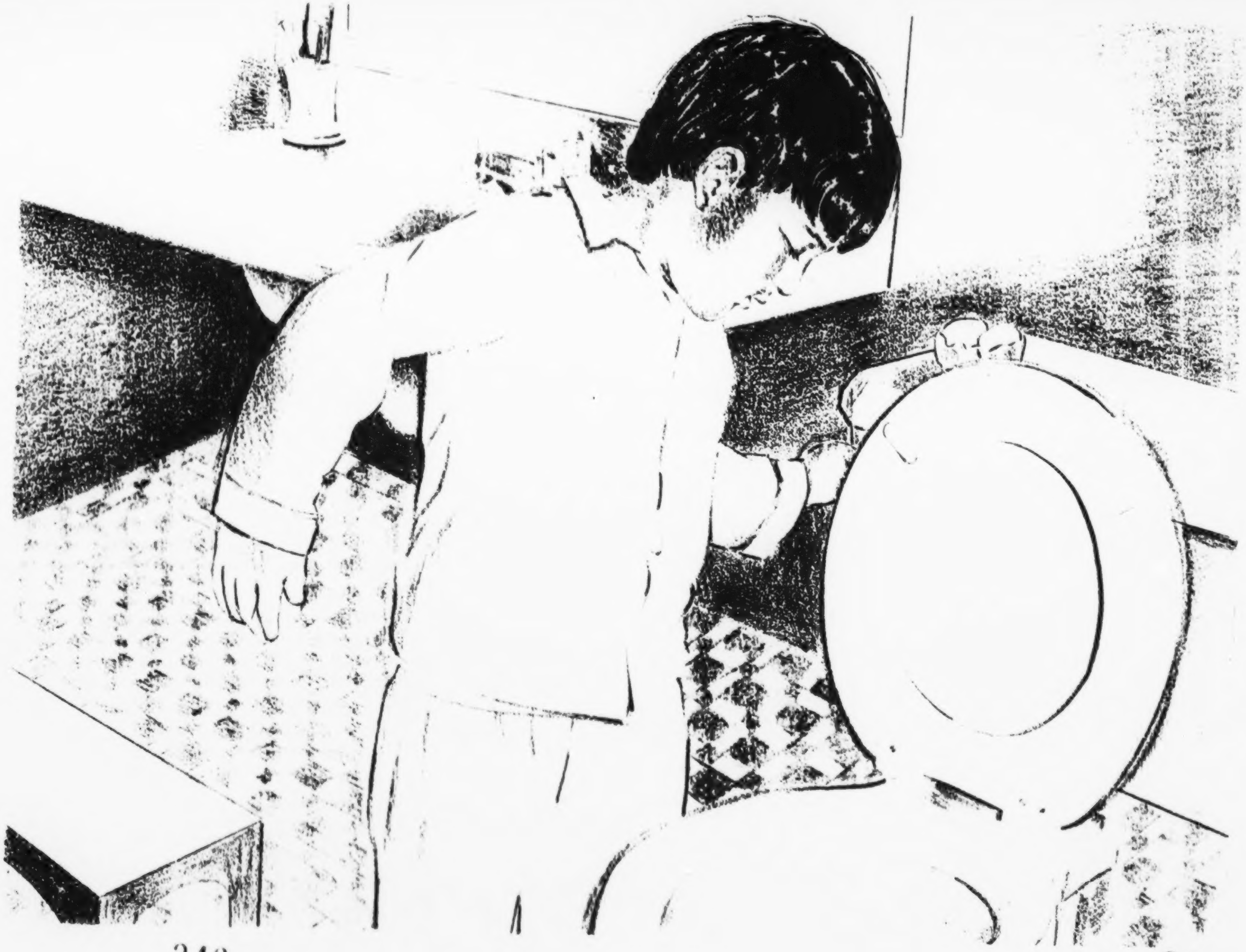
"Step 2 happens in the bathroom. First, I go to the potty. I always remember to flush, but Papá likes to remind me to do it anyway."



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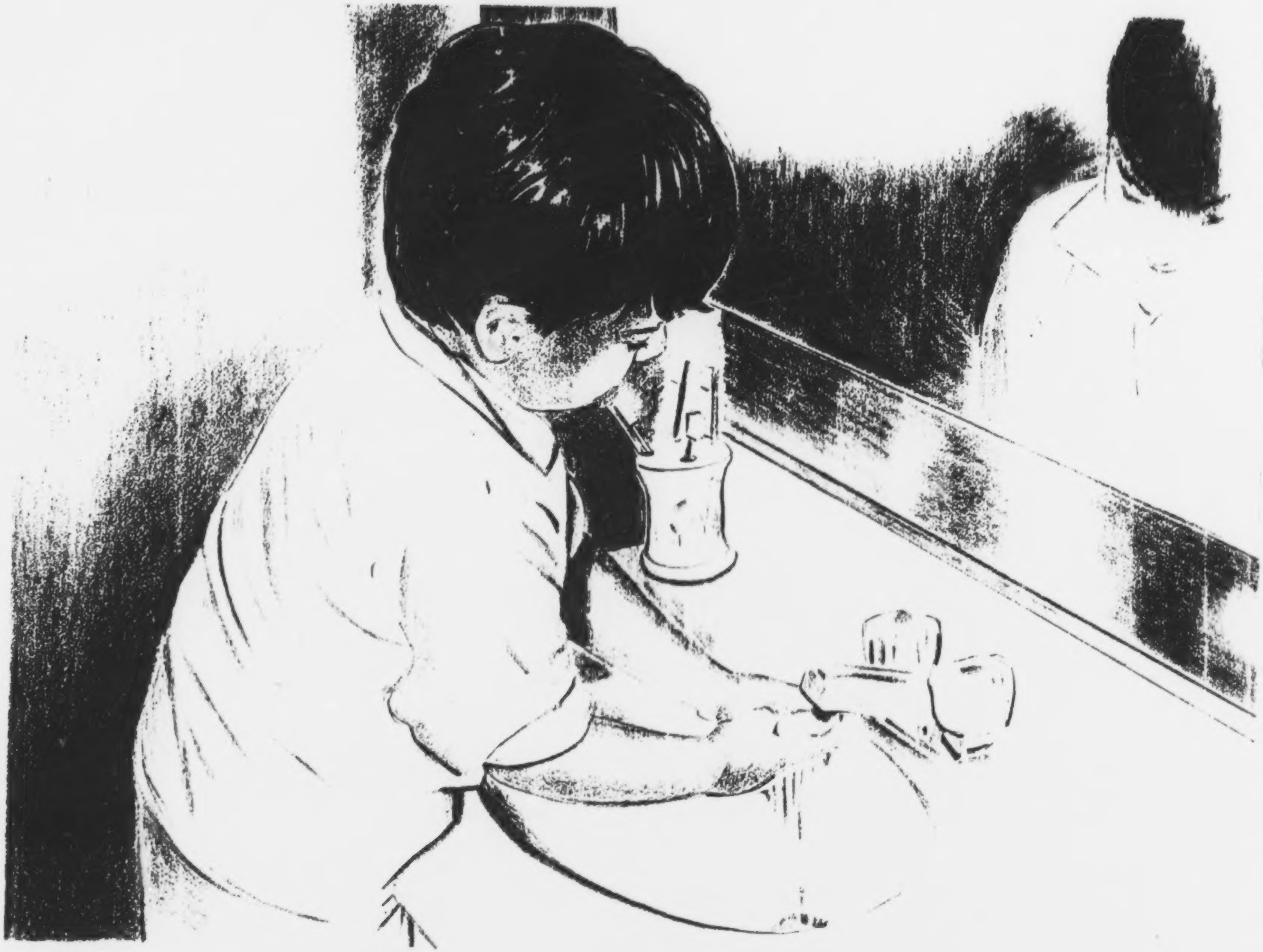
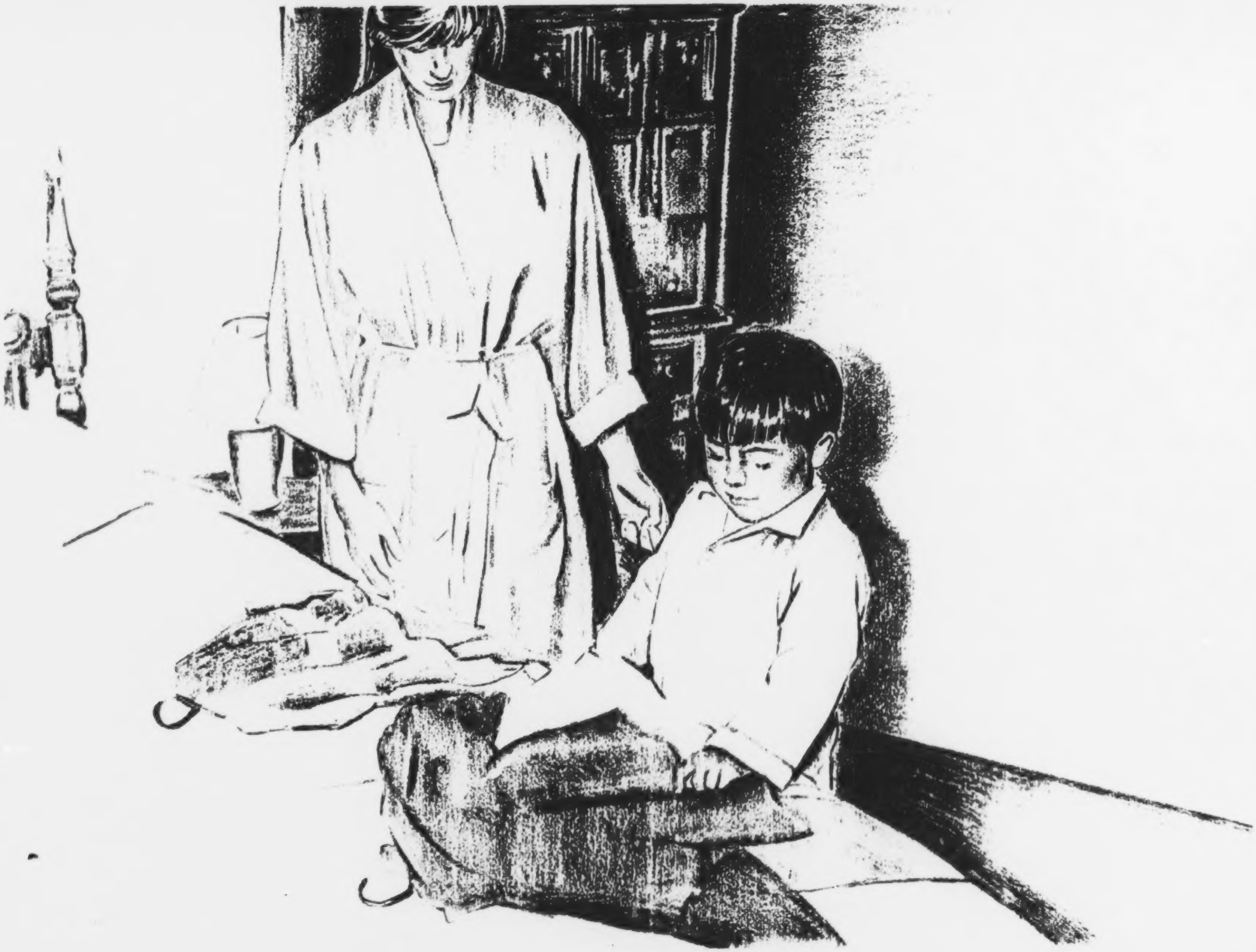
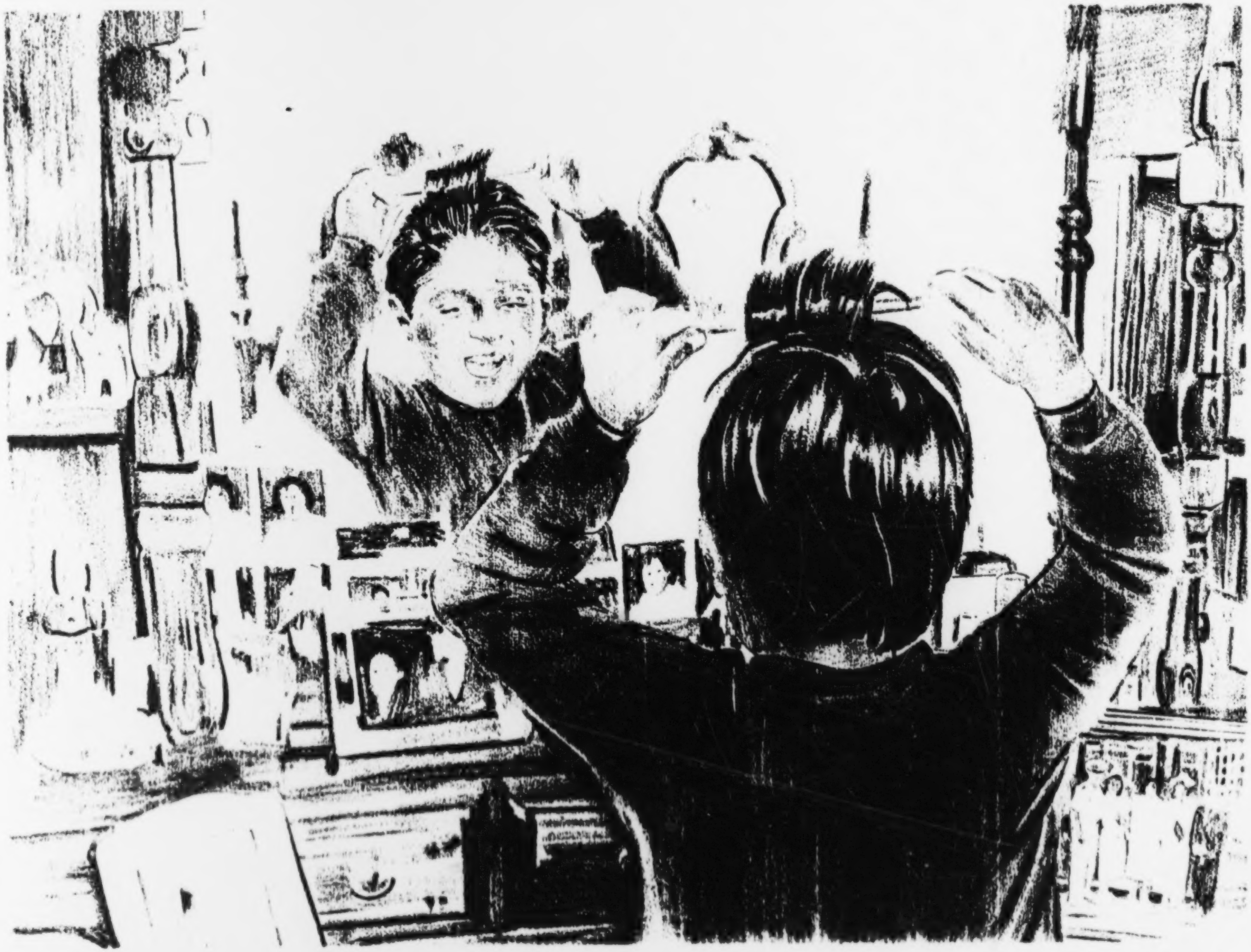
“Then, I wash my hands and face.”



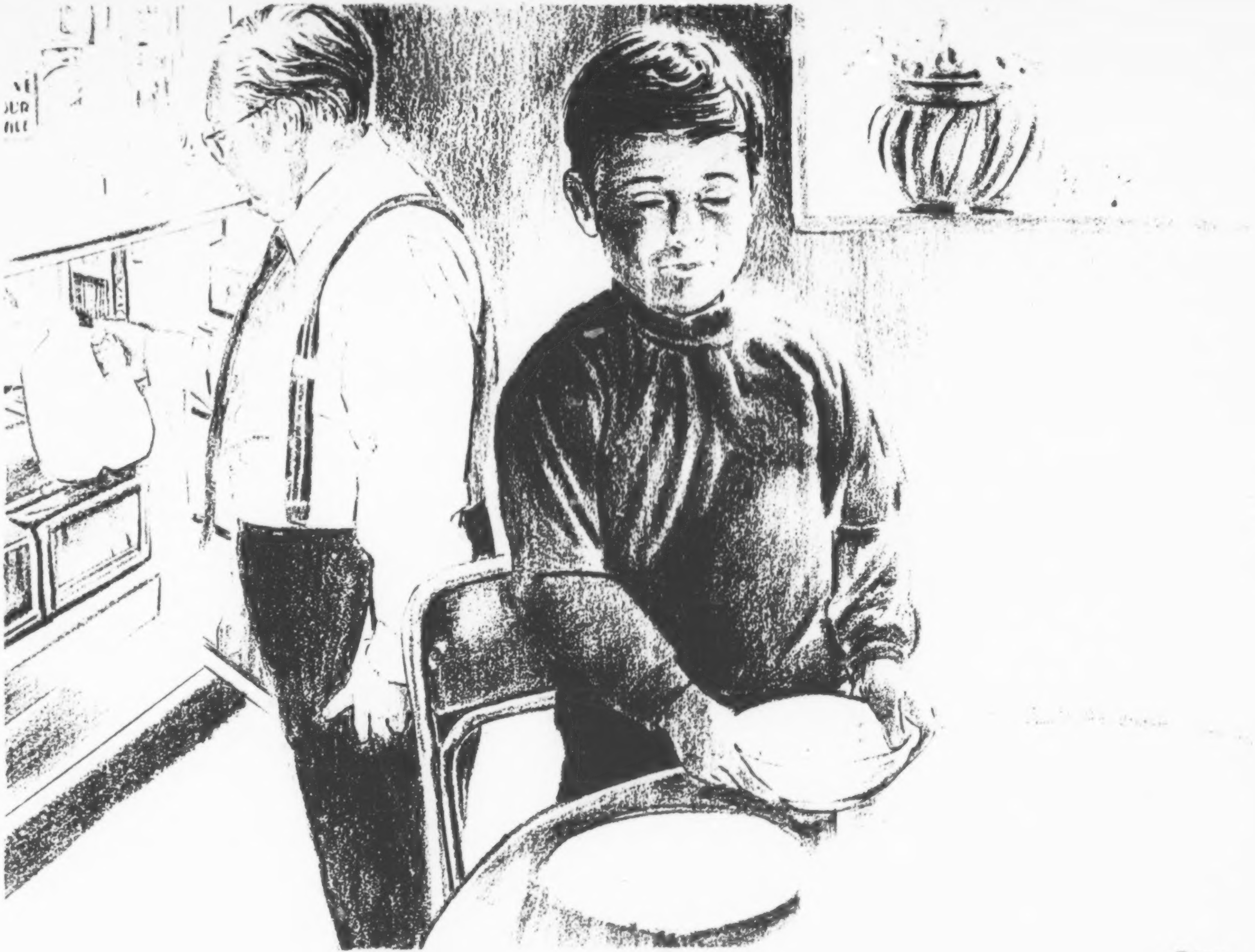
“Step 3 is getting dressed.
I pick out what I want to wear. I put my clothes on all by myself, but I let Mamá tuck my shirt in because she likes to help.”



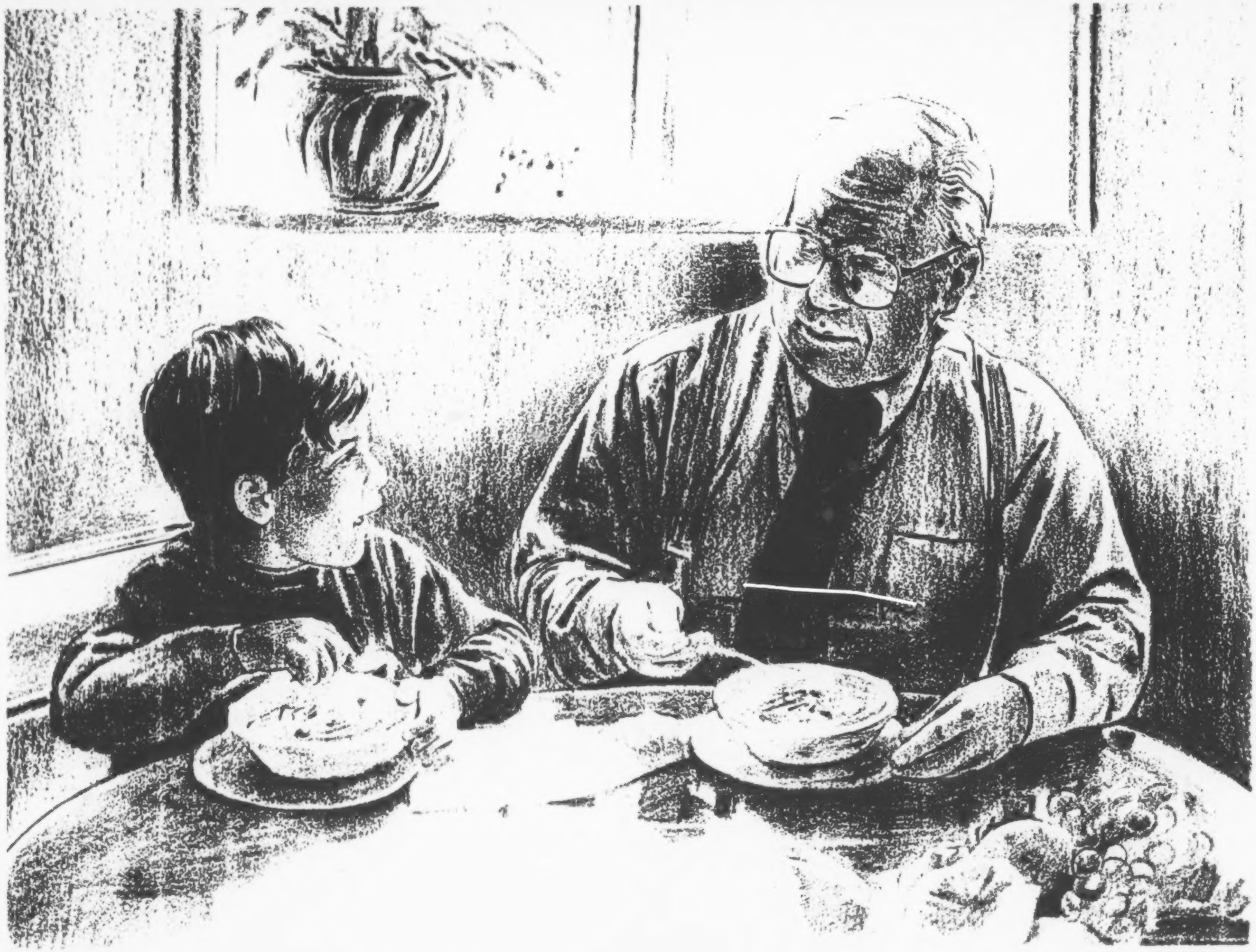
"When I'm all dressed, I like to peek in the mirror to see how good I look."



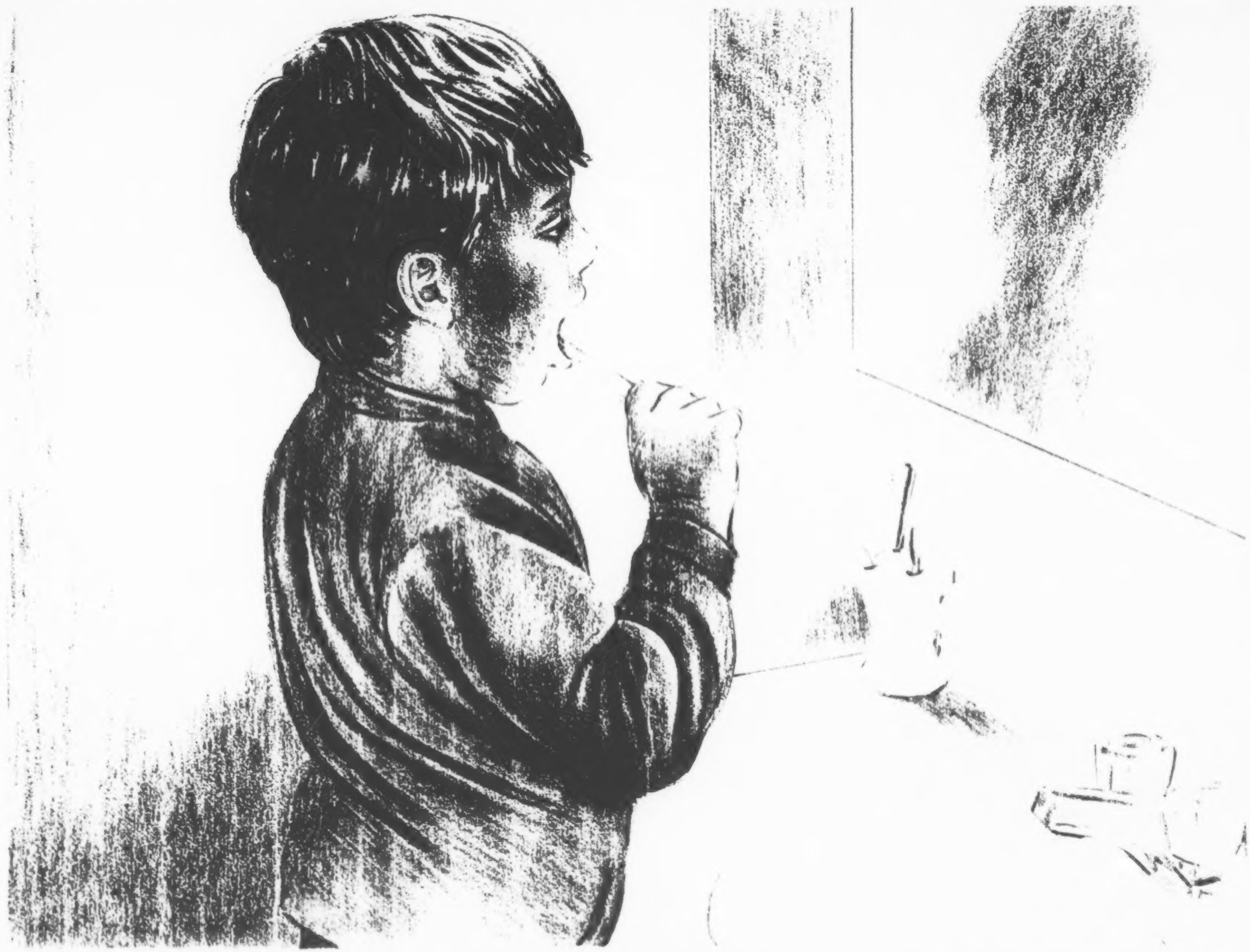
"*I*n step 4, it's time to eat.
I get out my bowl and spoon and cereal.
abuelo gets the milk for both of us."



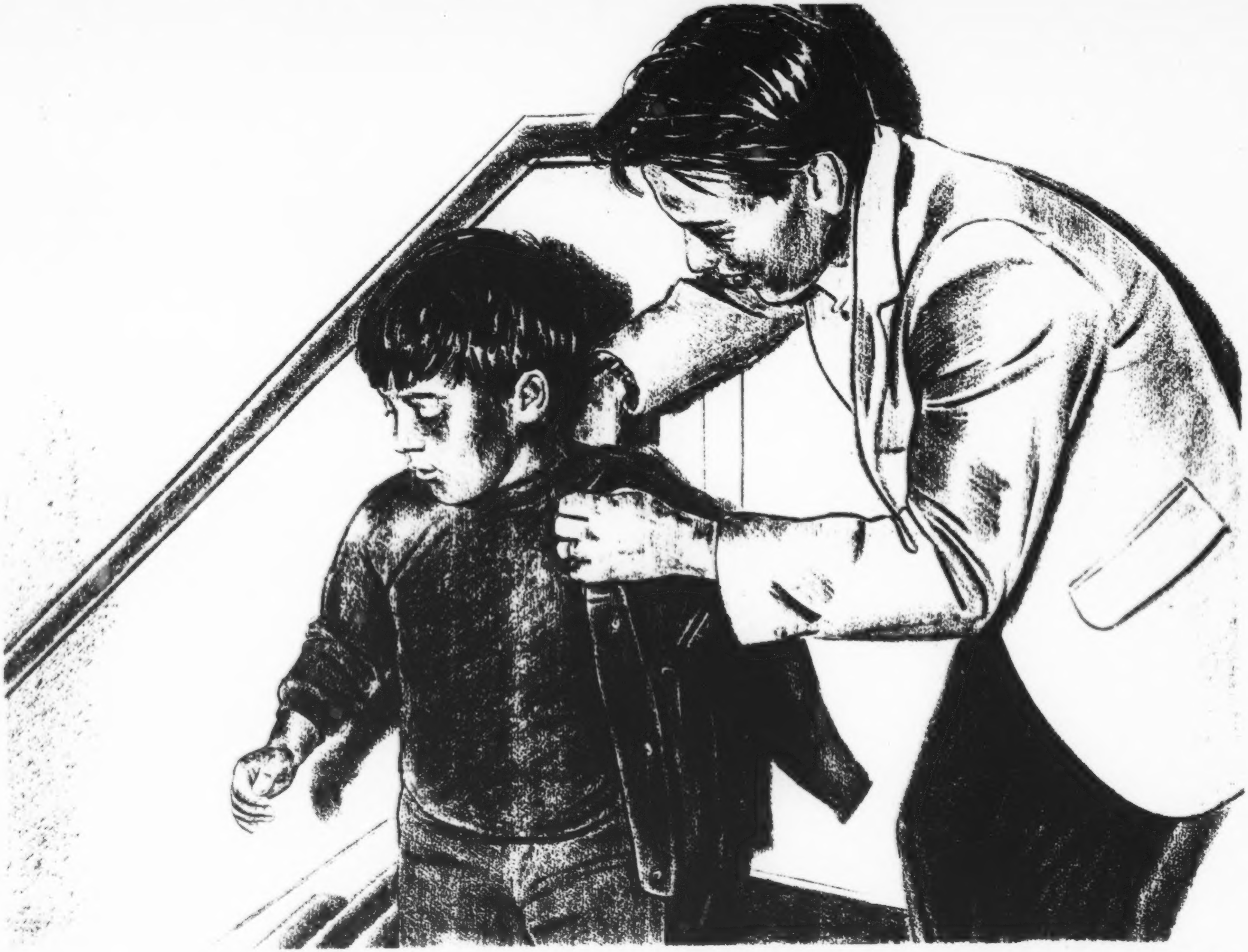
"*T*hen comes the best part.
Abuelo talks to me about growing up in Mexico and I tell him about the things I do at school."



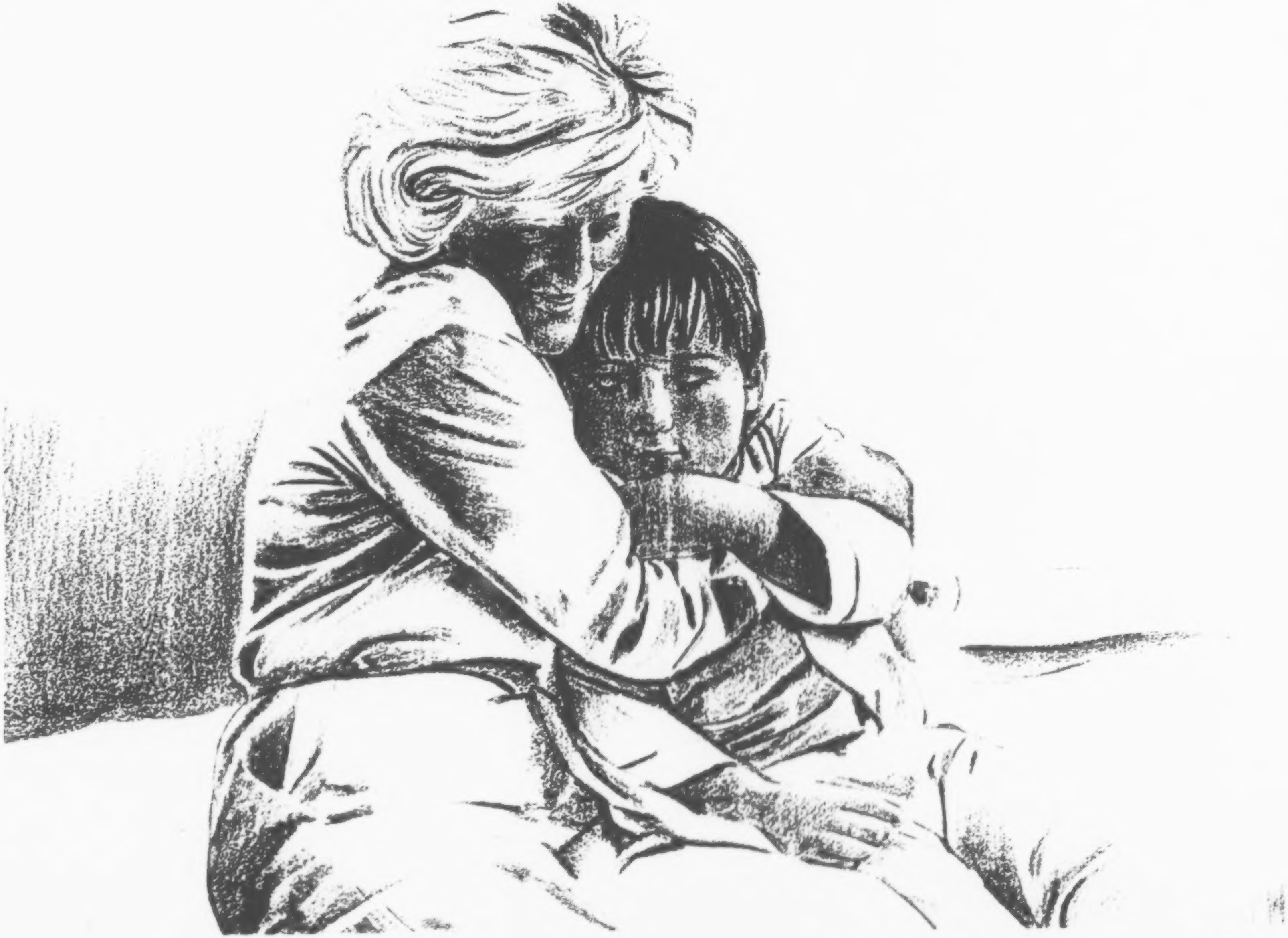
"Step 5 is the very last one.
While Papá gets ready, I brush my
teeth up and down and inside and out."



"Then, Papá and I grab our coats
and together we zoom out the door."

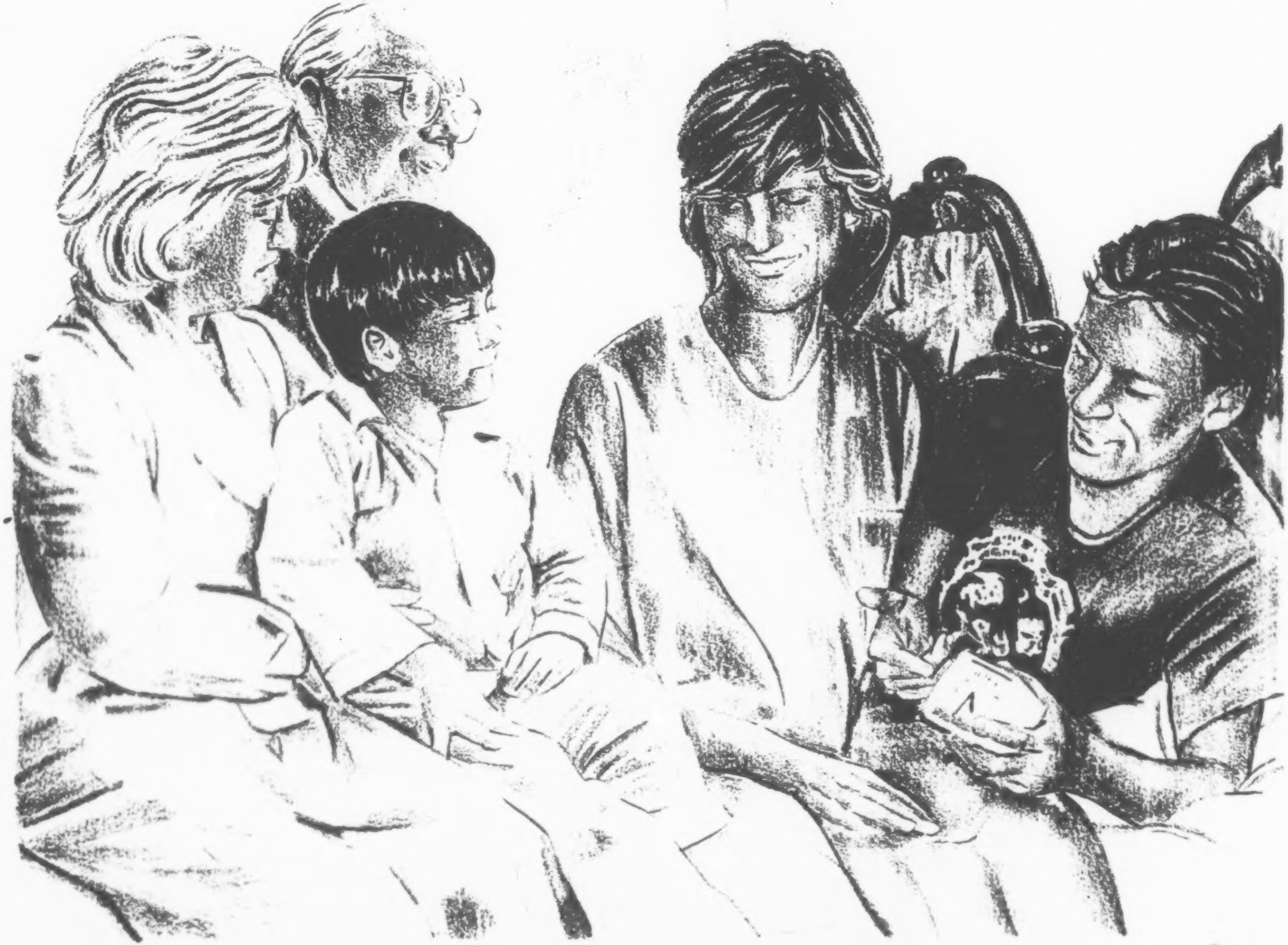


"Esto es todo," said Luis.
"Five steps and I'm ready for school."
"¡Fantástico!" said Tía Lucia as she gave him a hug.



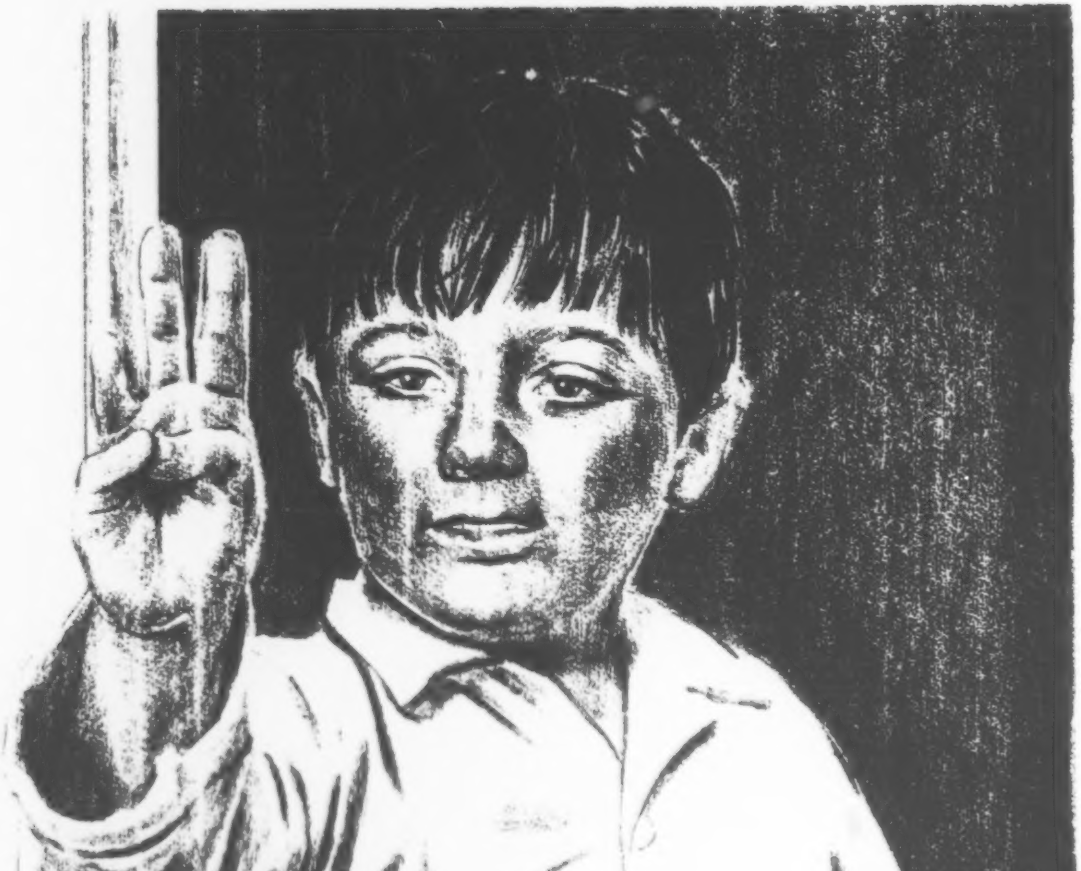
"Can I try my five steps now?" asked Luis.

"We all want to see the five steps in action," said Papá with a grin, "but today is Saturday. The only step I want to take right now is to go back to sleep. Monday morning will be here soon enough."



"Okay," agreed Luis as he walked back to his room counting very softly, "Uno, dos, tres, cuatro, cinco . . ."

THE END



Word List

The García family is Hispanic-American. They use some Spanish words when they talk to one another. Below are the English meanings for the Spanish words found in ***Get Ready . . . Here I Go.***

¿Qué pasa?	What's happening?
Tía	Aunt
Abuelo	Grandfather
Sí	Yes
Esto es todo	That's all
Fantástico	Great
Uno	One
Dos	Two
Tres	Three
Cuatro	Four
Cinco	Five

Get Ready . . . Here I Go

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Illustrator's Models

- Alberto F. Lopez as Papá Grande
- Amelia B. Lopez as Tía Lucia
- Alexis Lopez-Buitrago as Papá
- Ann Lopez-Buitrago as Mamá
- Nikolas Lopez as Luis
- Garrett Lopez-Buitrago as Carlos

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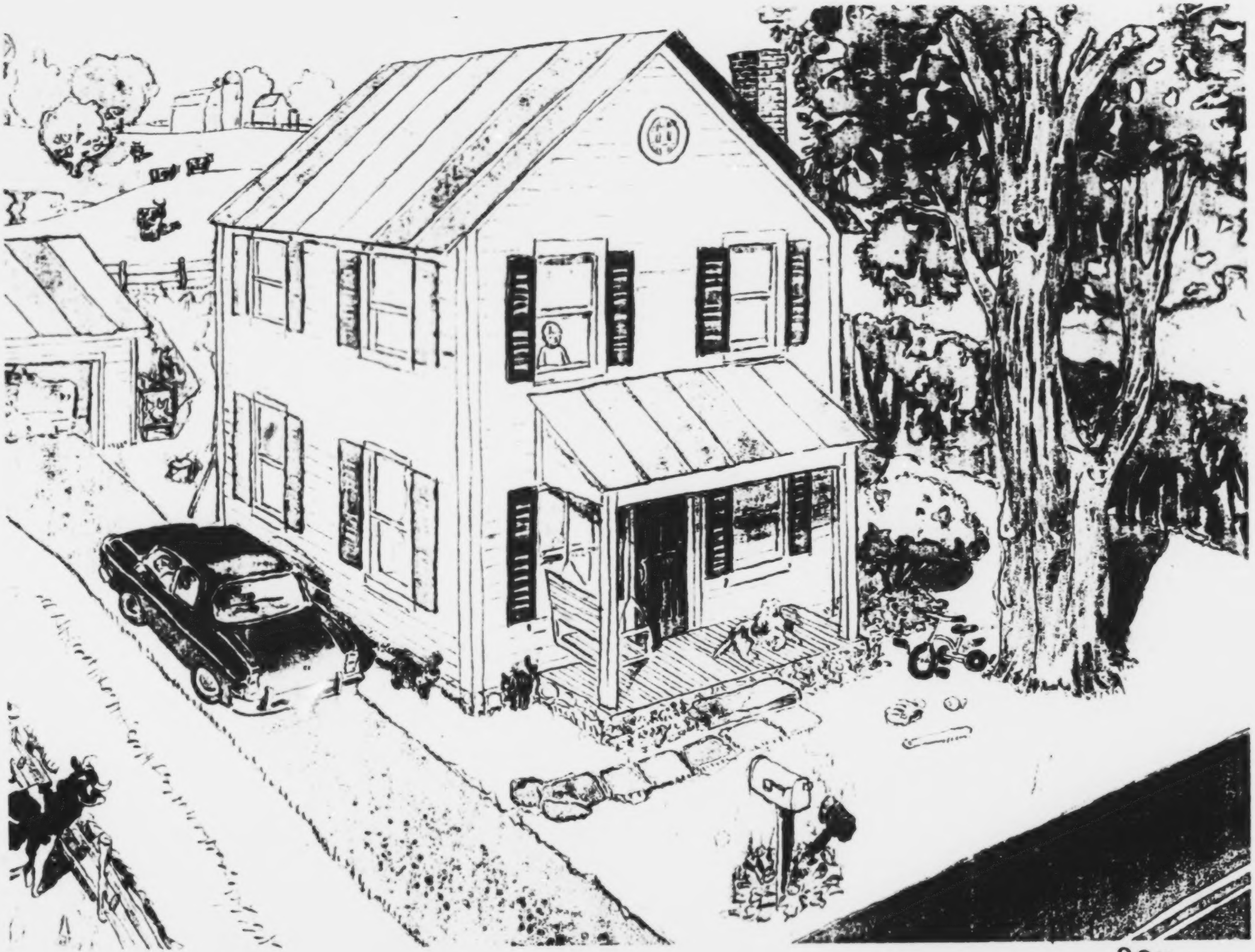
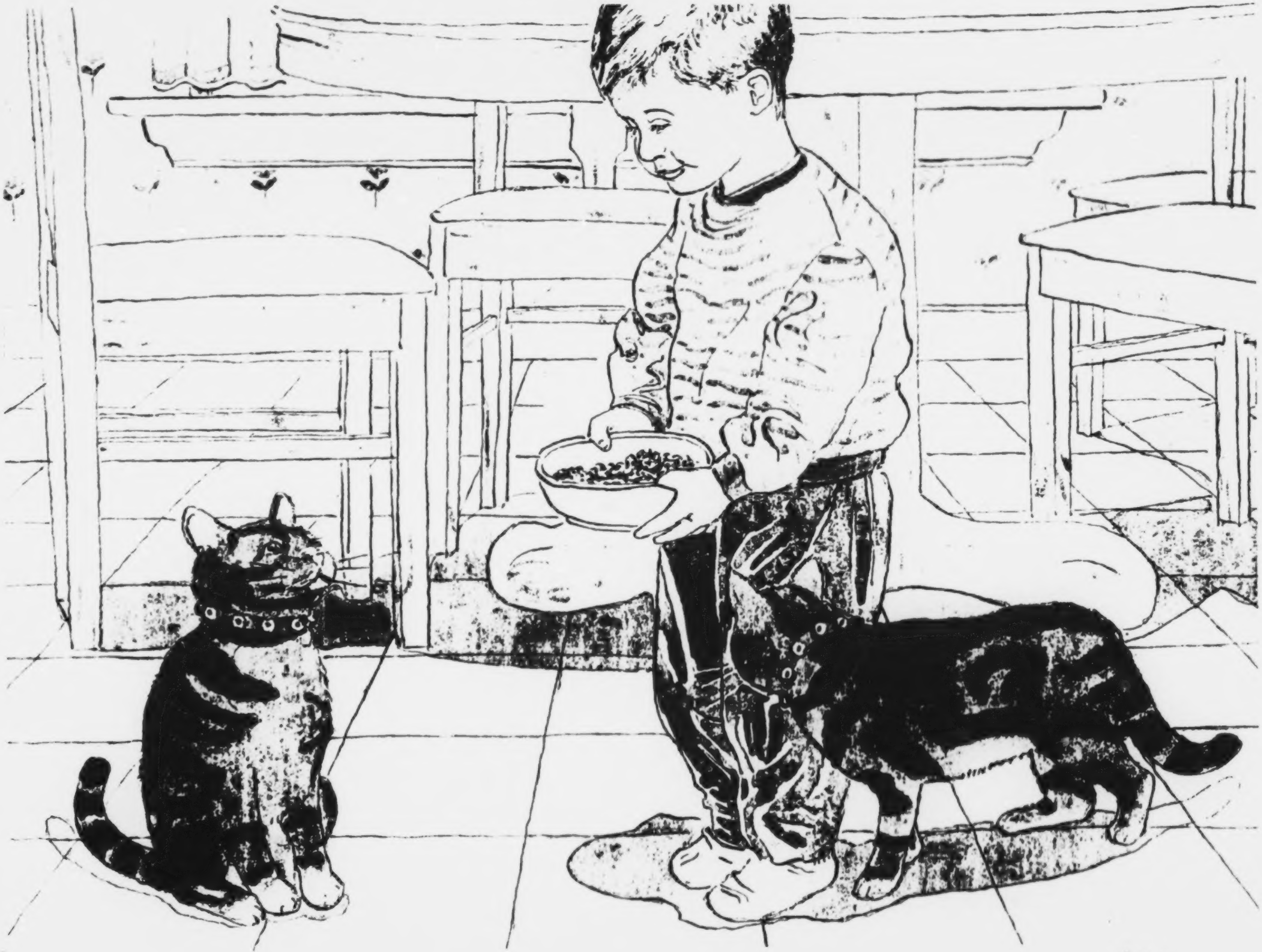
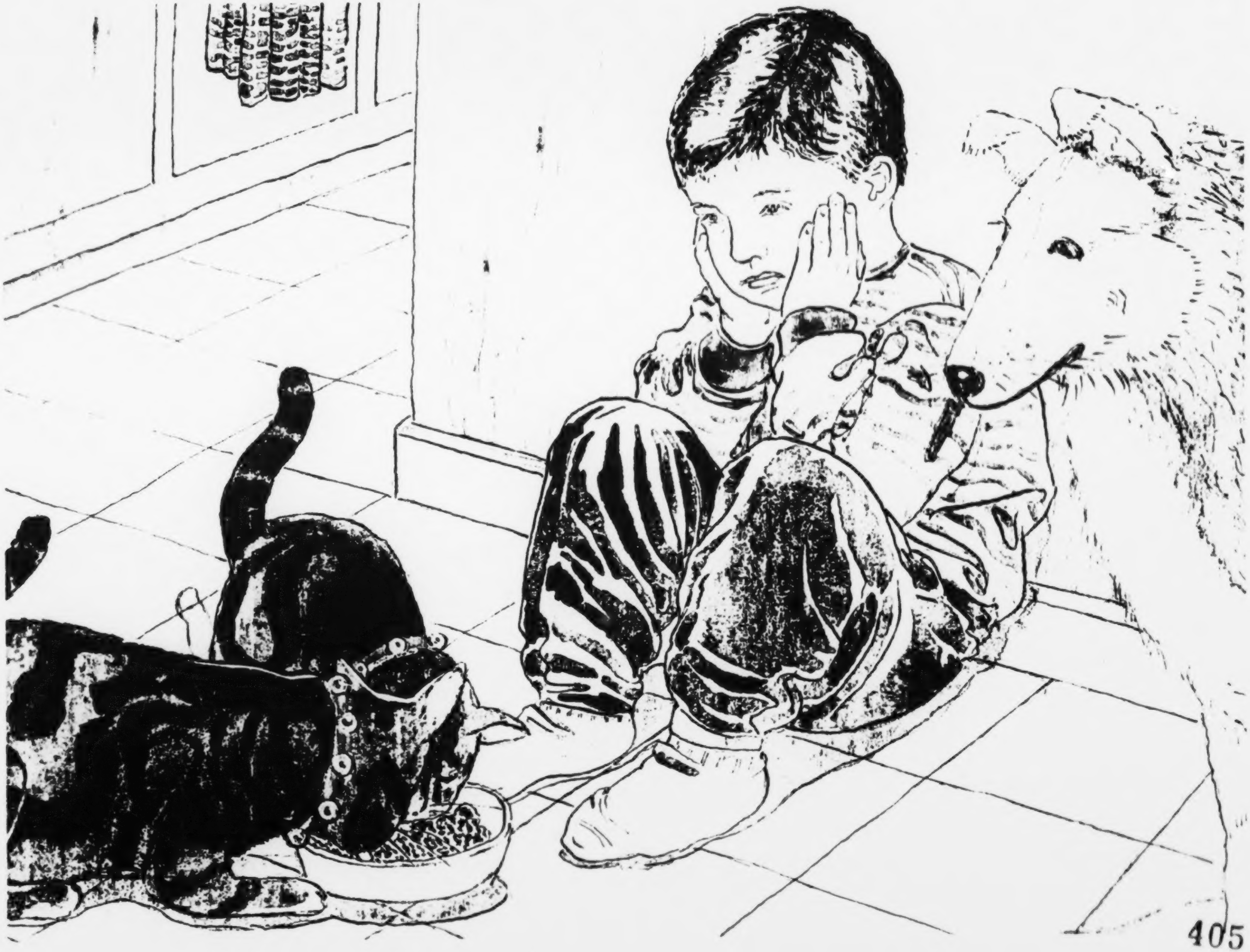
*N*ear a winding country road,
there is a white wooden house with bright red shutters.
This is where Matthew Manning
--known as M&M --
lives with his one dog,
two cats,
three gerbils
and four bunny rabbits.
His sisters and dad live here, too.



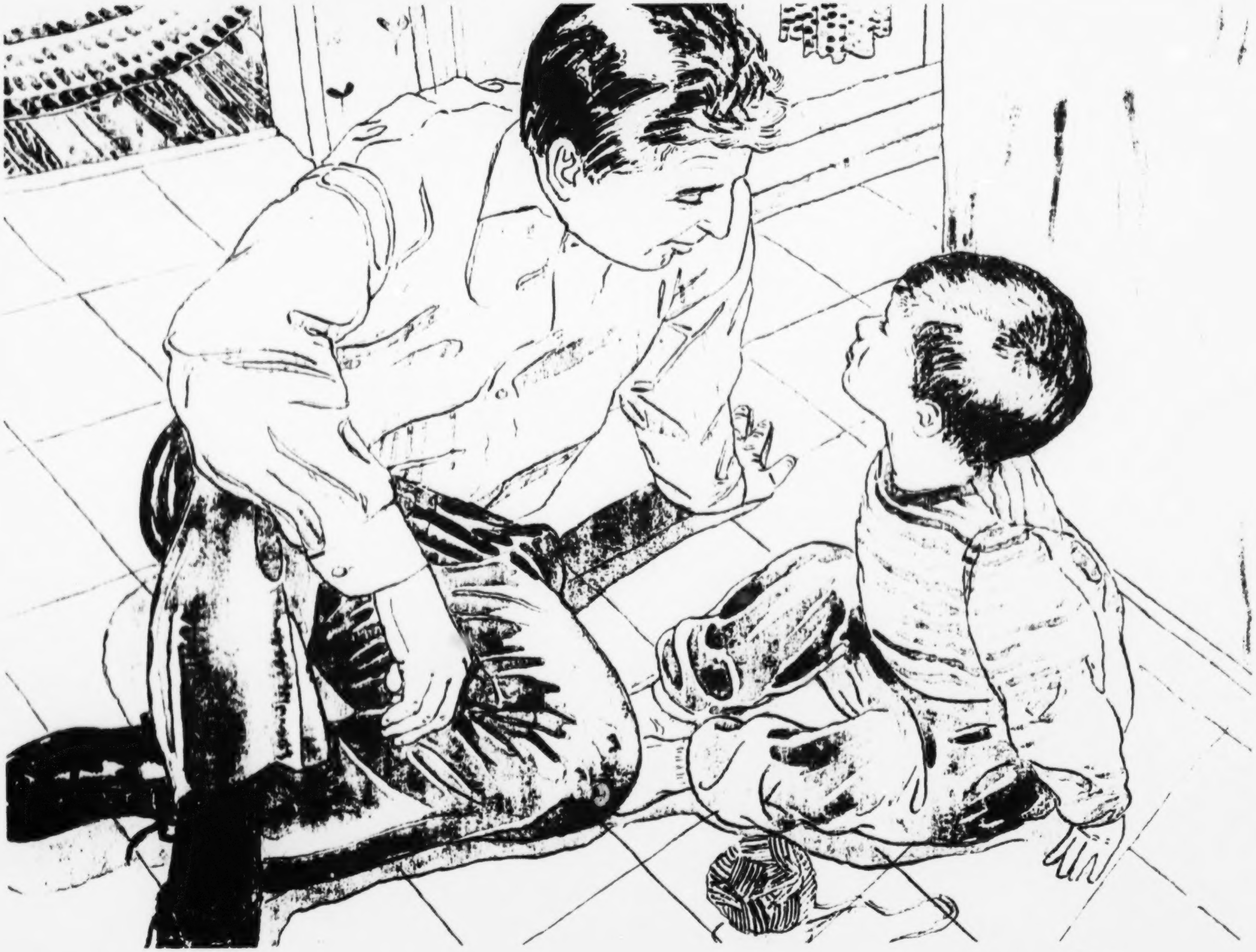
M&M is a big boy.
He can
wash his face and hands
go to the potty
feed his pets
and have fun playing
all by himself.



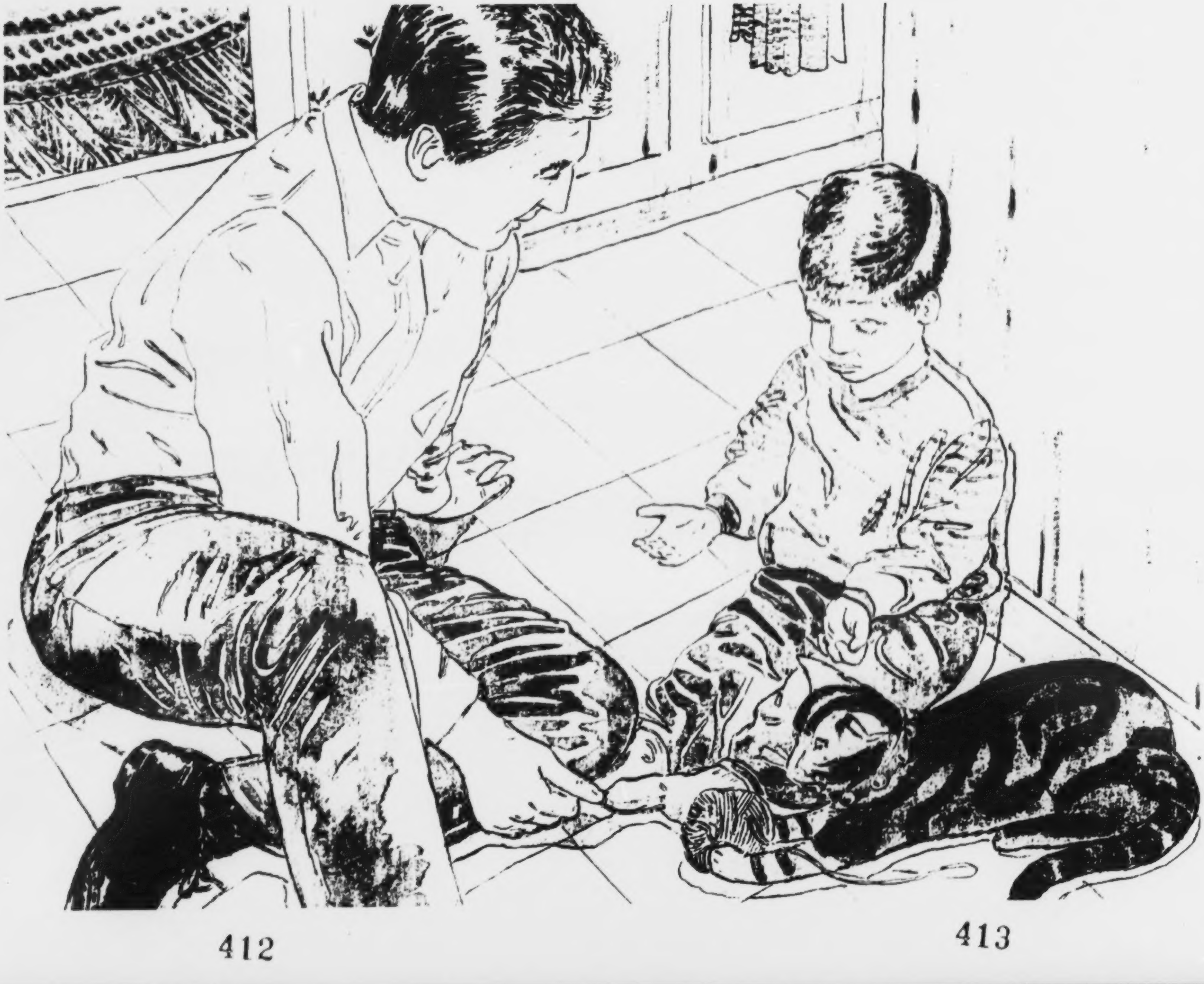
But M&M worries that there are some things he can't do all by himself. This makes him frown.



" What's wrong, M&M?" asks his dad.
"I am worried," says M&M, "about who can help me
do the things I can't do by myself?"



"What things are worrying you?" asks his dad.
"I know that when I start going to day care,
you will take me there," says M&M.
"But how will I get home?"



412

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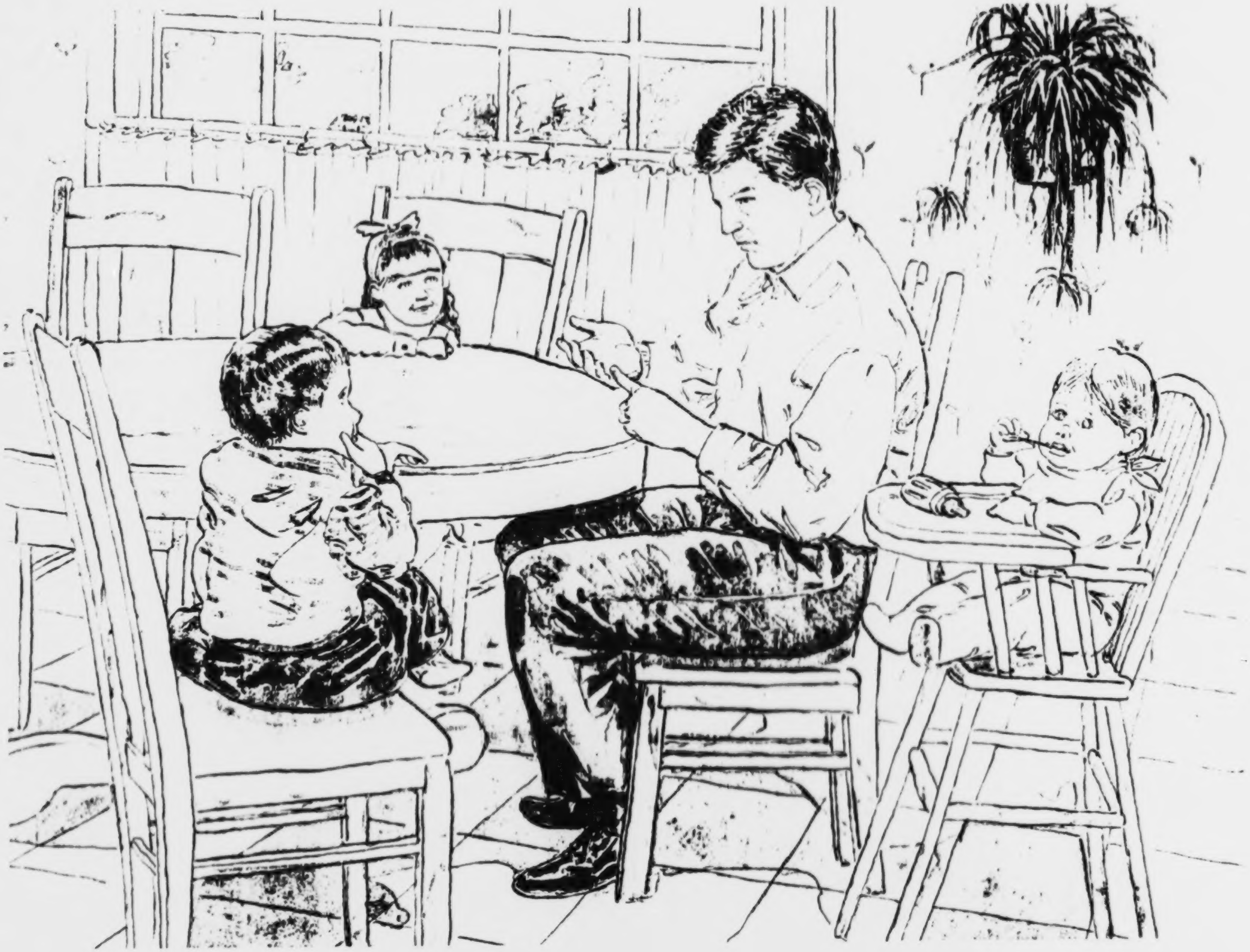
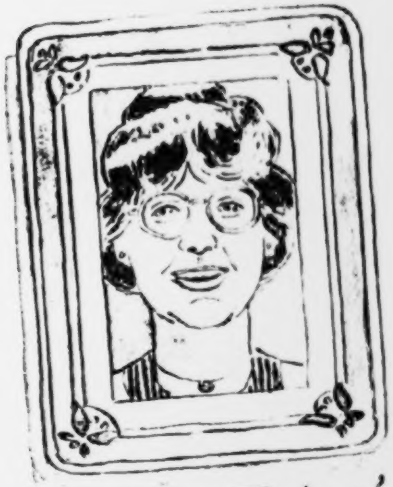
"That's a good question," says M&M's dad.
"Let's name all the people who can help you."
"You can," says M&M.
"That's right," says dad.
"And Bobby Tucker's mom can take you and Bobby home.
When Grandma Manning comes to visit, she can take you home, too.
But no one else is allowed to take you home."

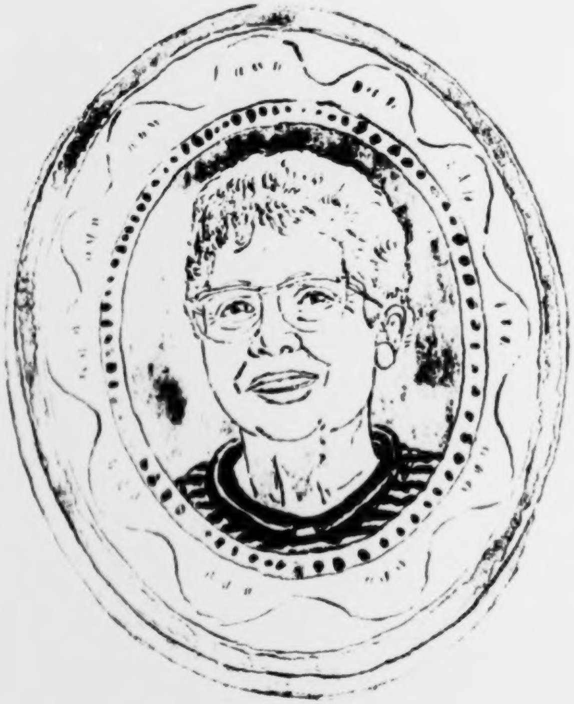


Who are the people who can help M&M get home from day care?

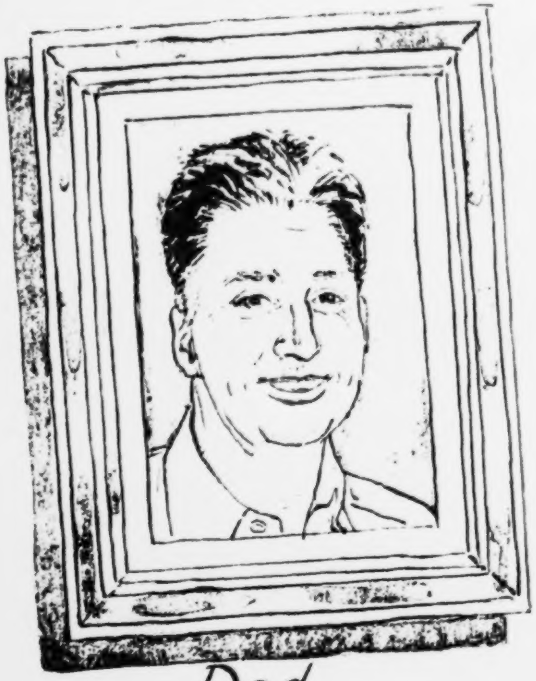
There's
M&M's Dad
Bobby Tucker's Mom
Grandma Manning.



Bobby Tucker's
Mom

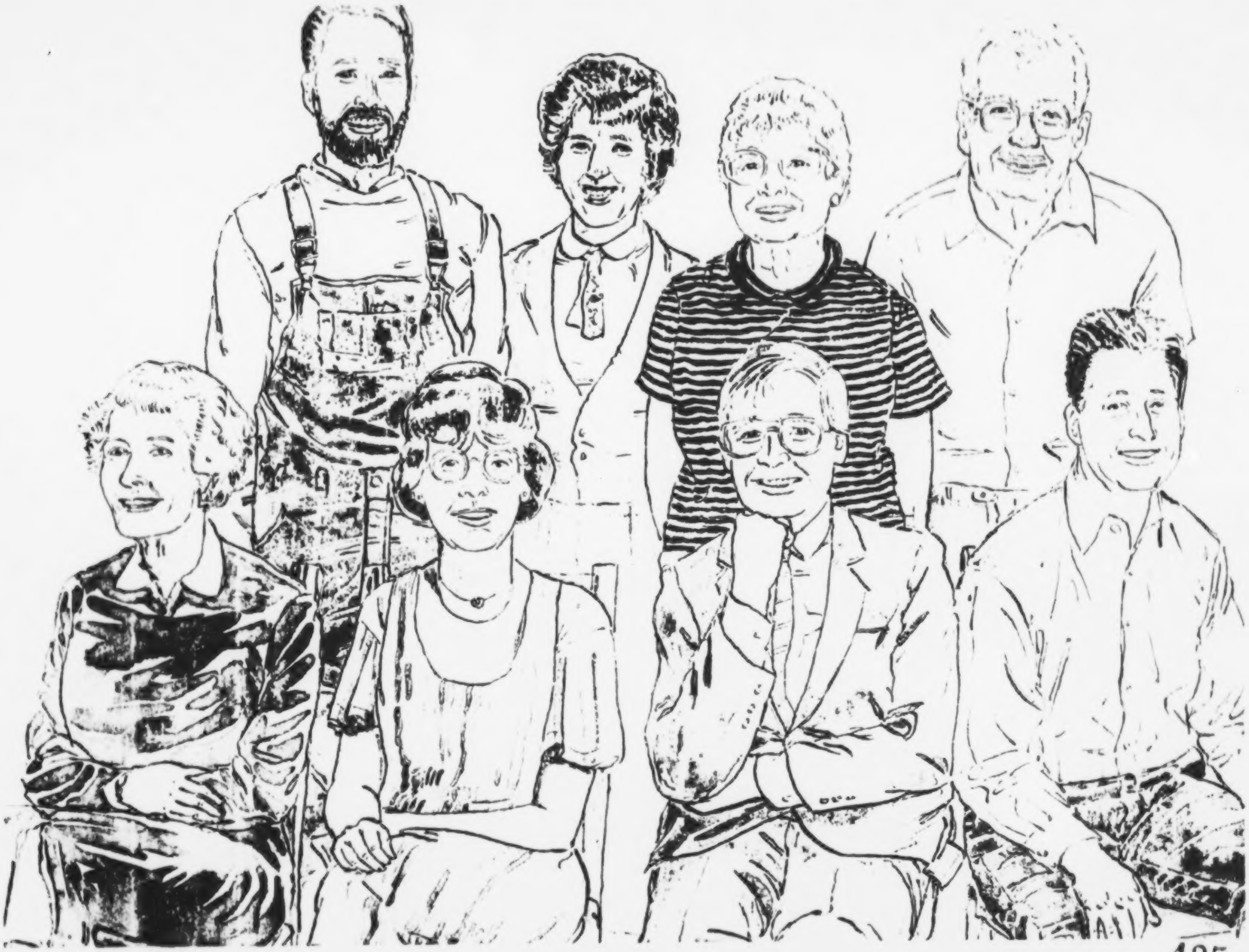


Grandma
Manning

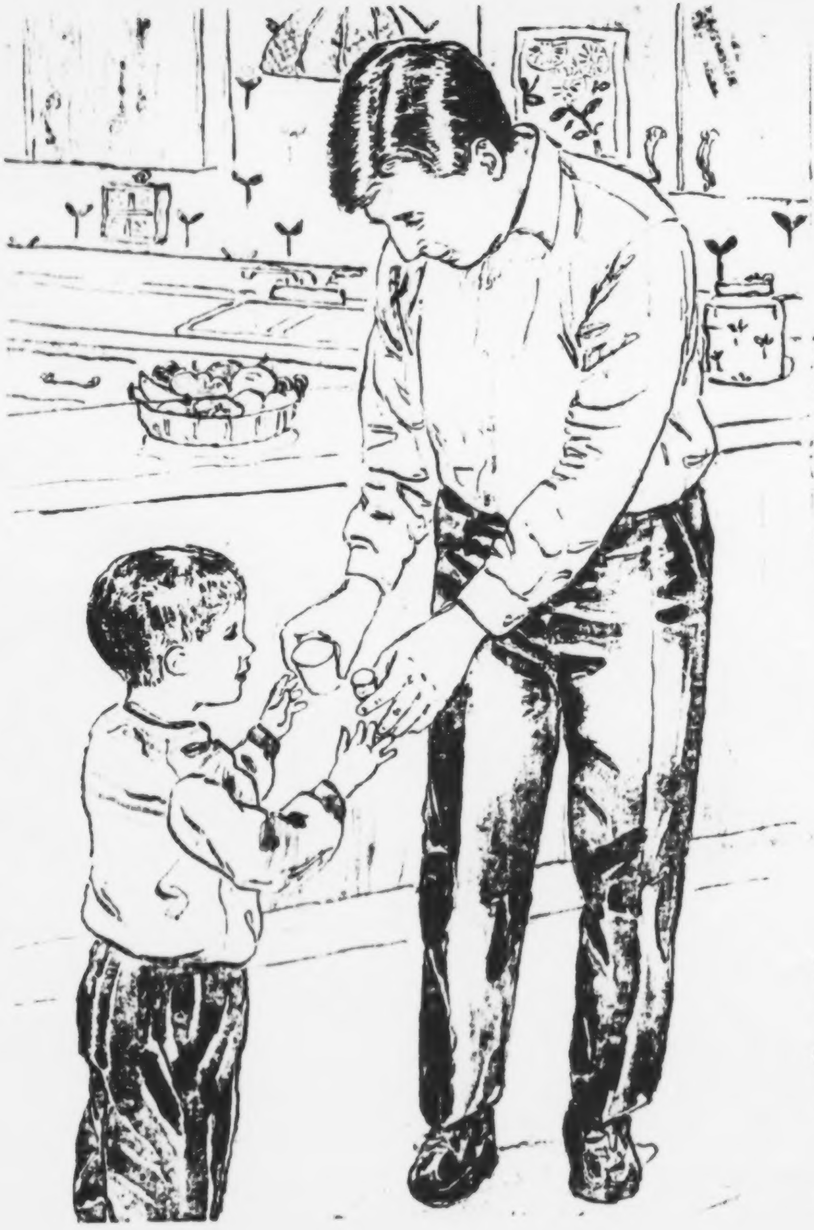


Dad

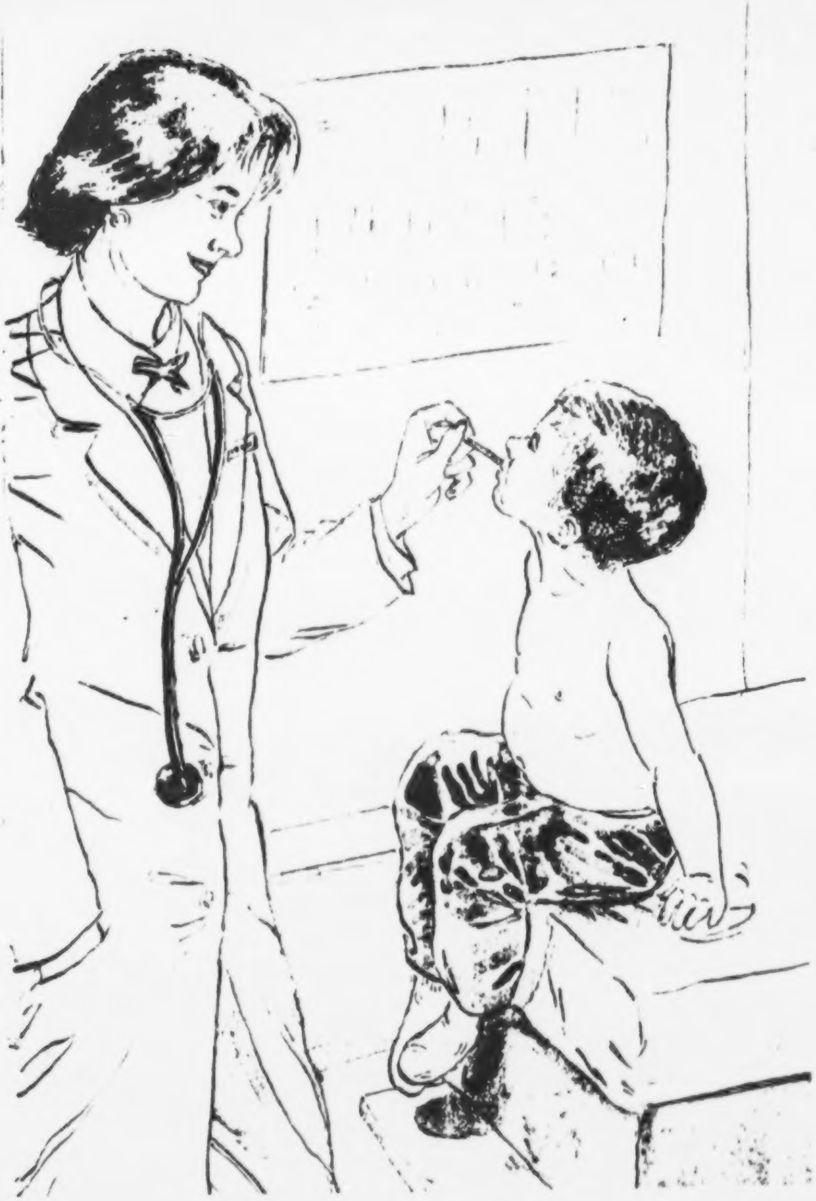
Can you find all the people who can help
M&M get home from day care?



"What if I get sick?" says M&M. "Who can give me medicine?"
"Another good question," says M&M's dad.
"Let's name those people."
"You can," says M&M.
"That's right. When you get sick at home, I can
give you medicine," says M&M's dad.
"And of course, Dr. Frankel can too, at her office."



428



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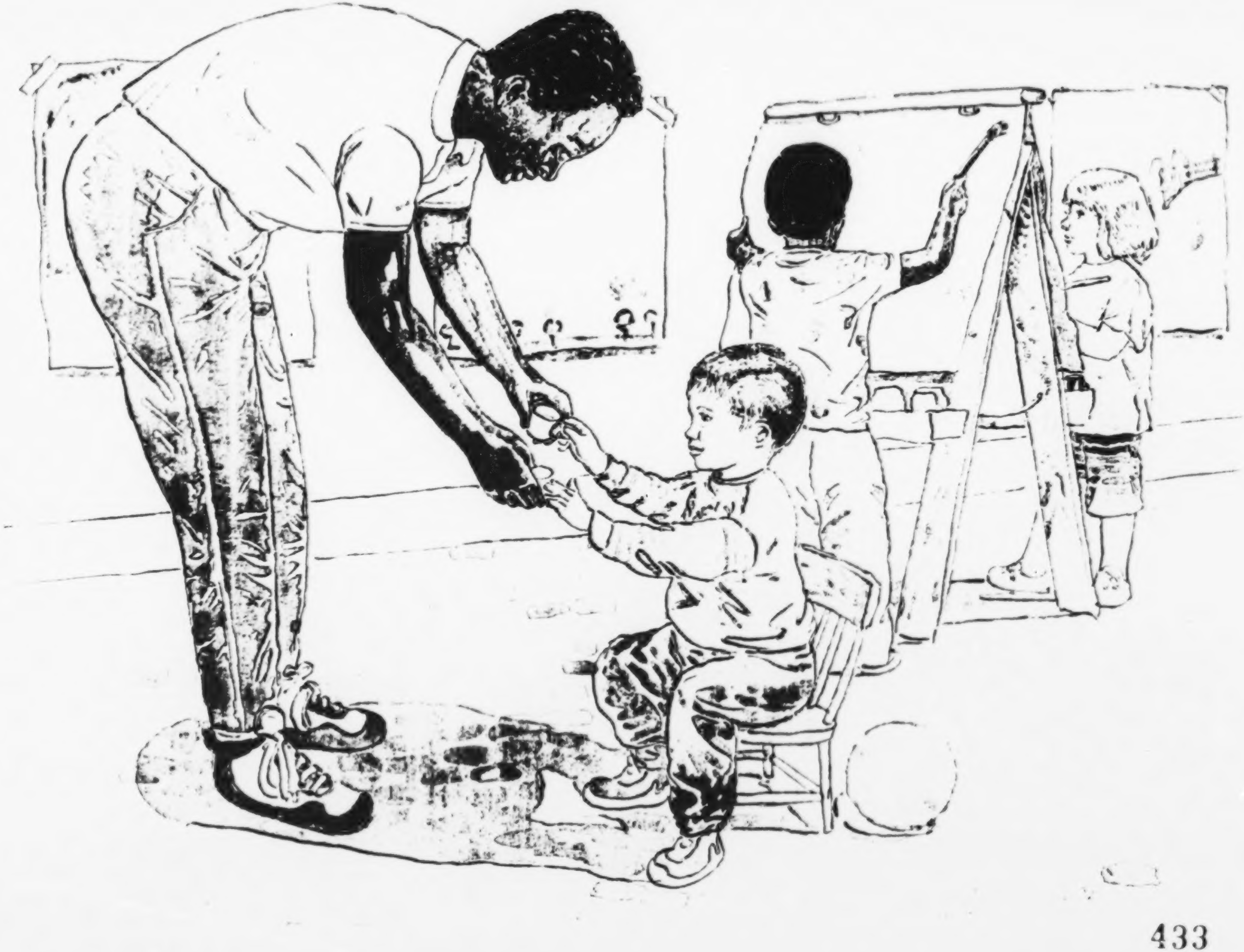
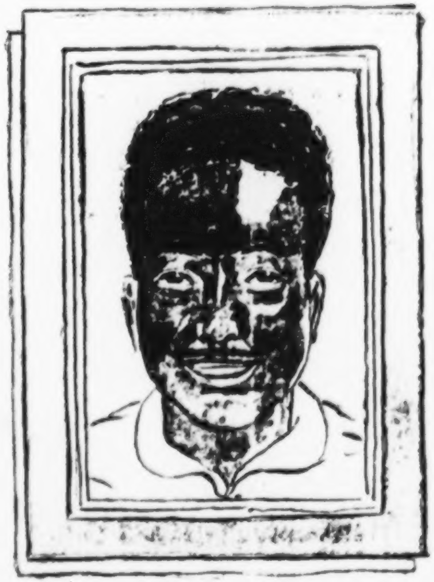
"But what if I get sick at day care?" asks M&M. "Well," says M&M's dad, "your teacher, Mr. Jenkins, can help. But remember, no one else is allowed to give you medicine."

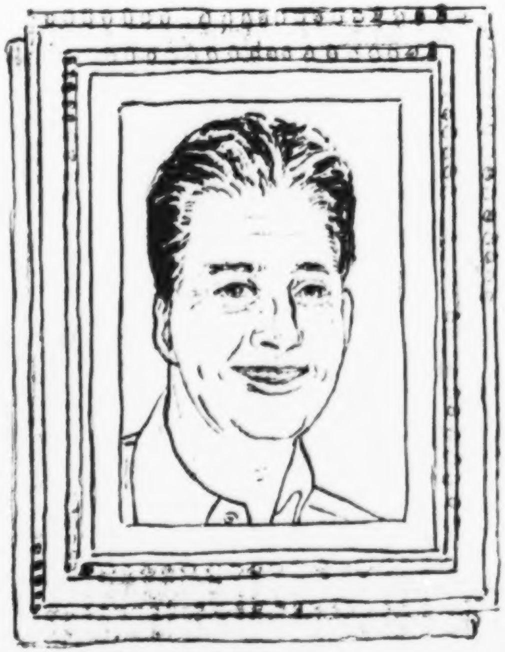


Who can give M&M medicine when he's sick?

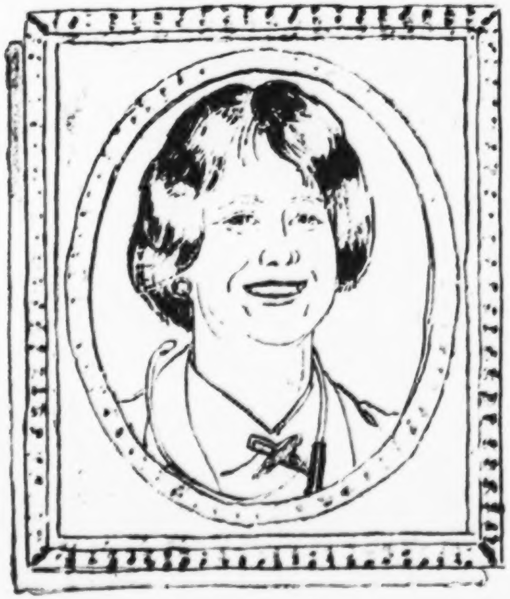
There's
M&M's Dad
M&M's doctor, Dr. Frankel
M&M's teacher, Mr. Jenkins.



Mr. Jenkins

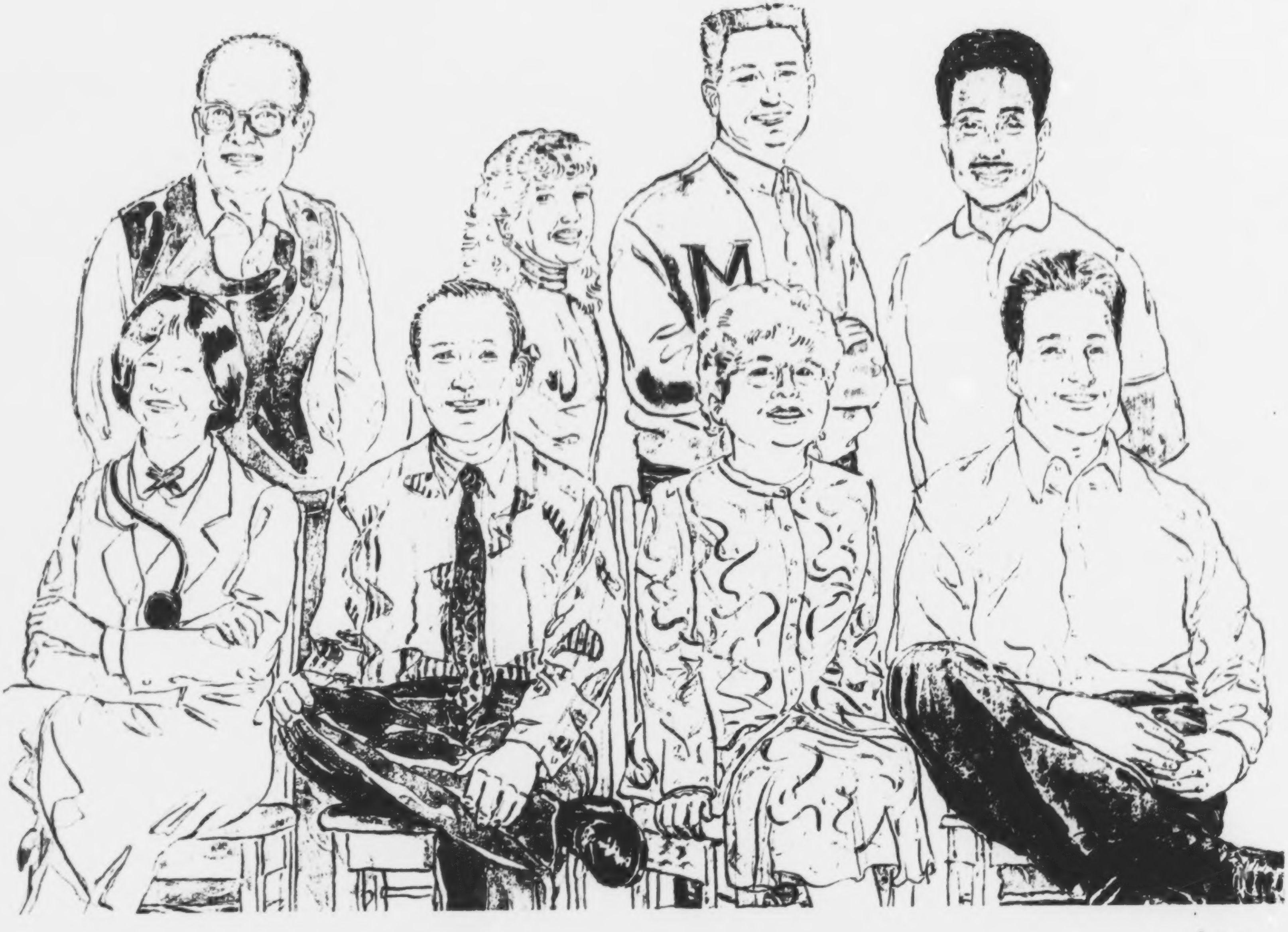


Dad

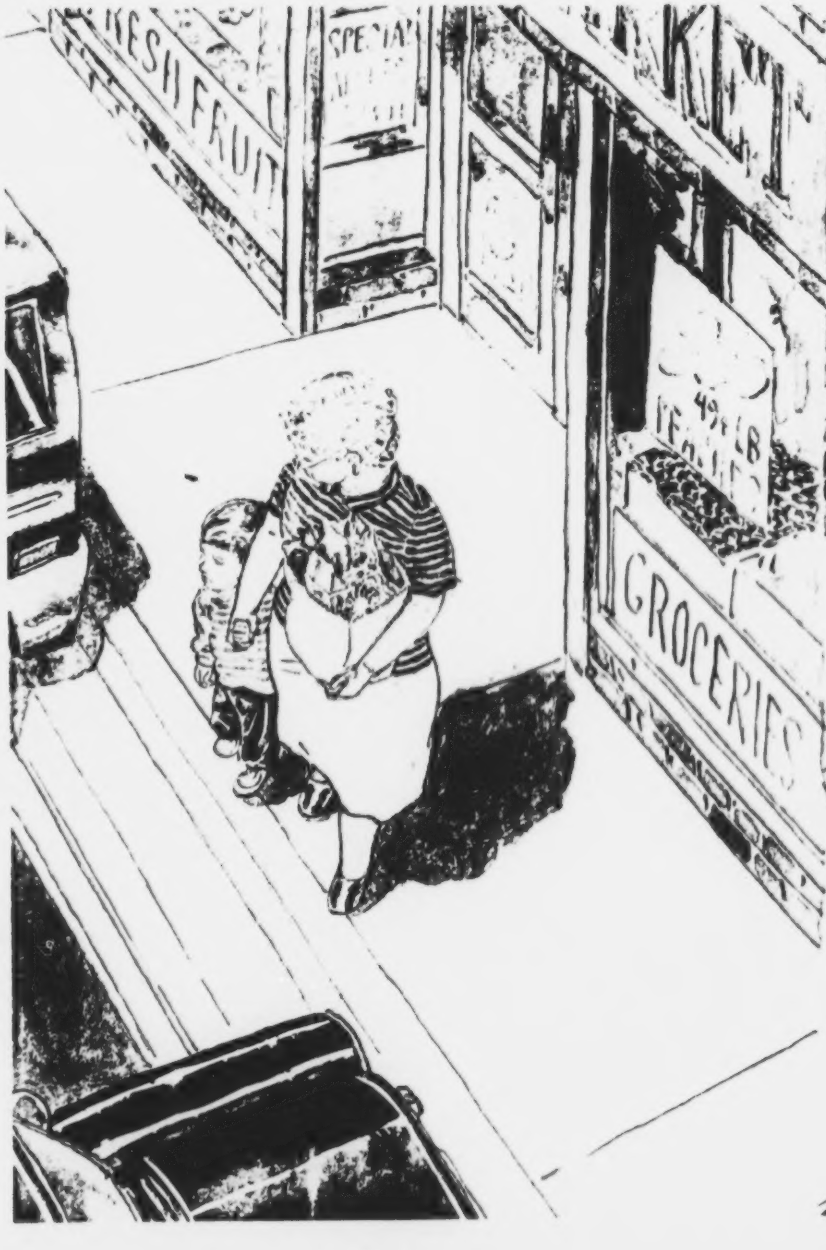


Dr. Frankel

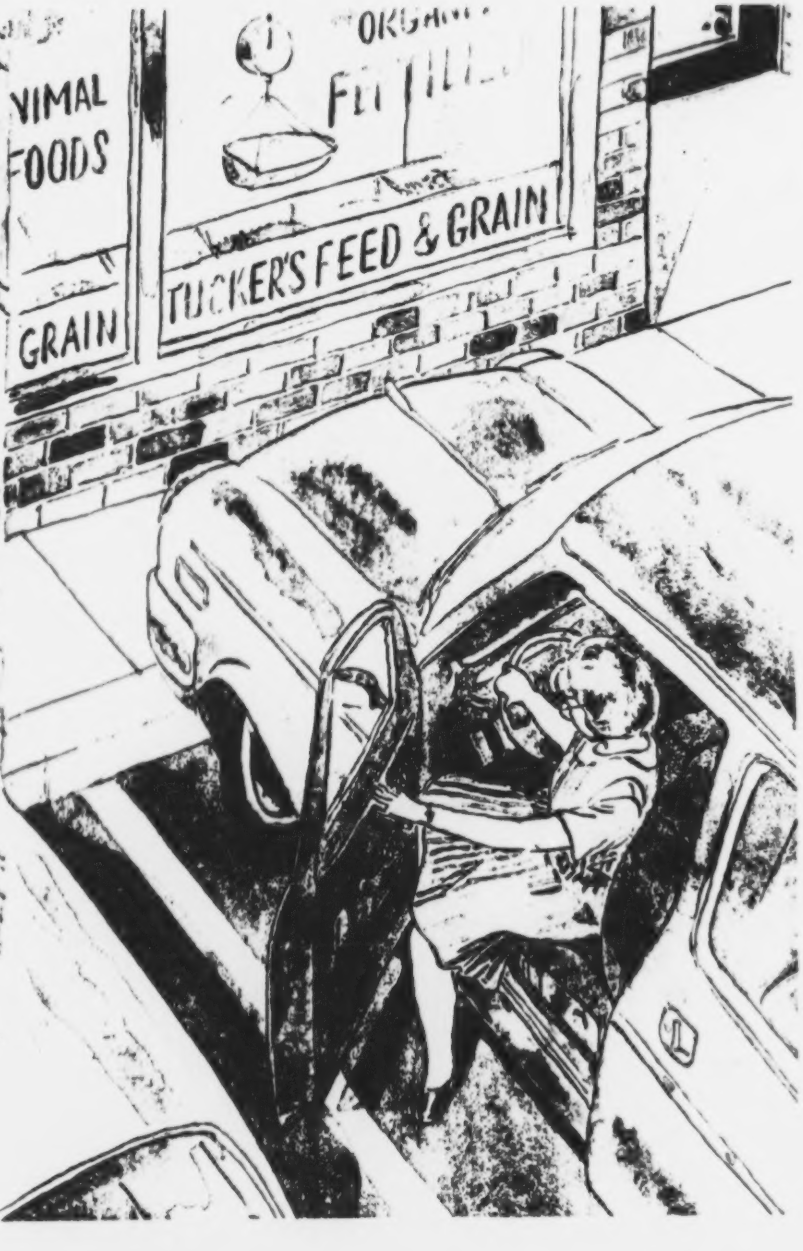
Can you find all the people who can help give
M&M medicine when he's sick?



" What if I need to go somewhere?" asks M&M.
"Who can drive me?"

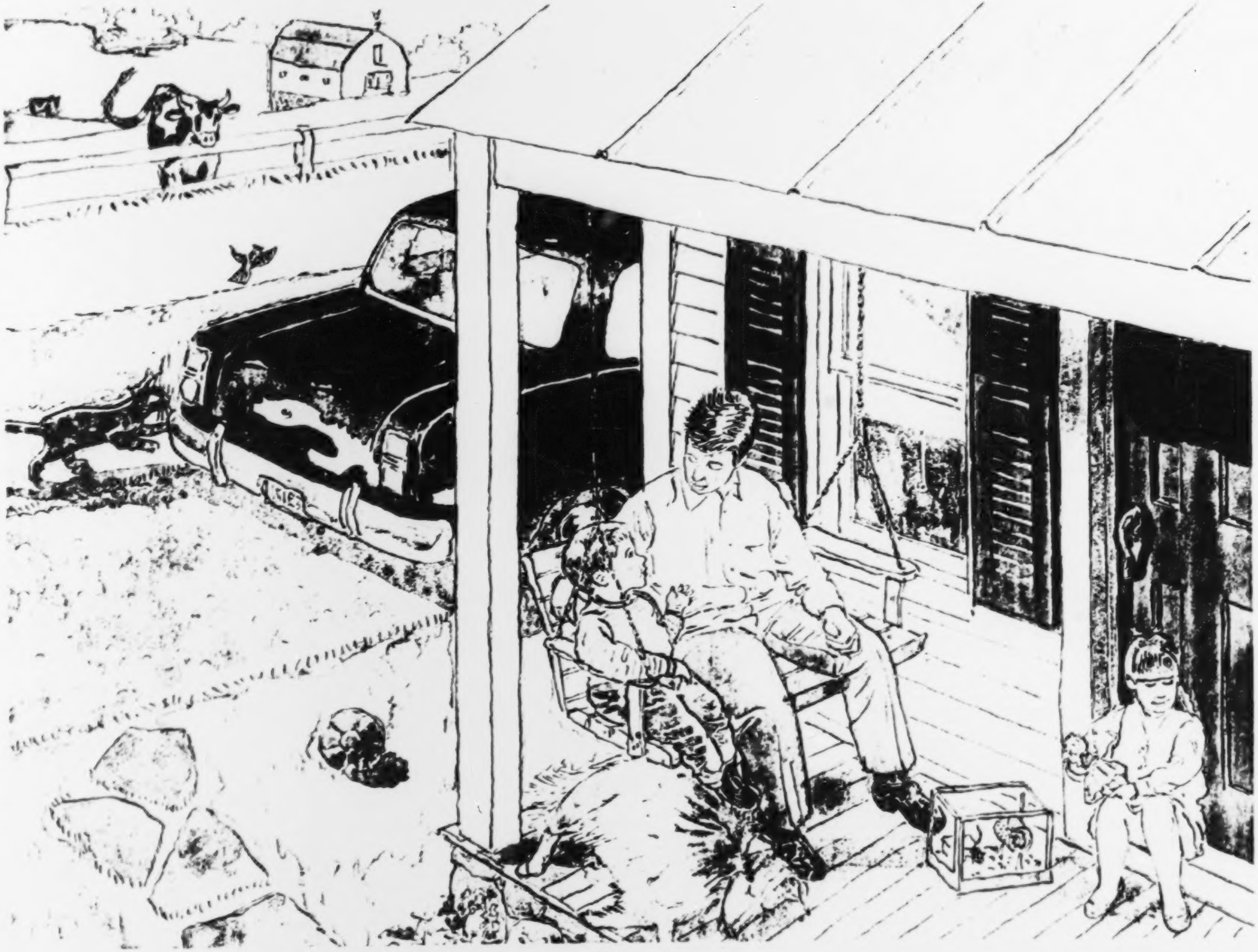


RESH FRUIT
SPECIAL
49¢ LB
GROCERIES



NIMAL
FOODS
GRAIN
ORGANI
TUCKER'S FEED & GRAIN

"*T*his is very important," says M&M's dad.
"I can drive you places.
So can Mrs. Tucker and Grandma Manning.
But unless I tell you it's OK,
never, ever get into a car with anyone else."



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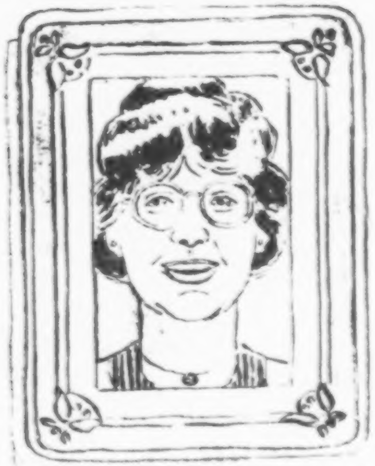
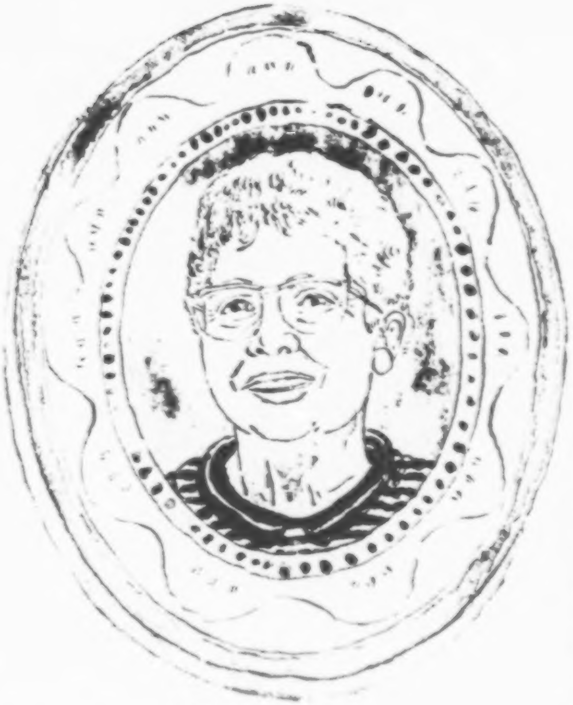
Who are the people who can drive M&M
where he needs to go?

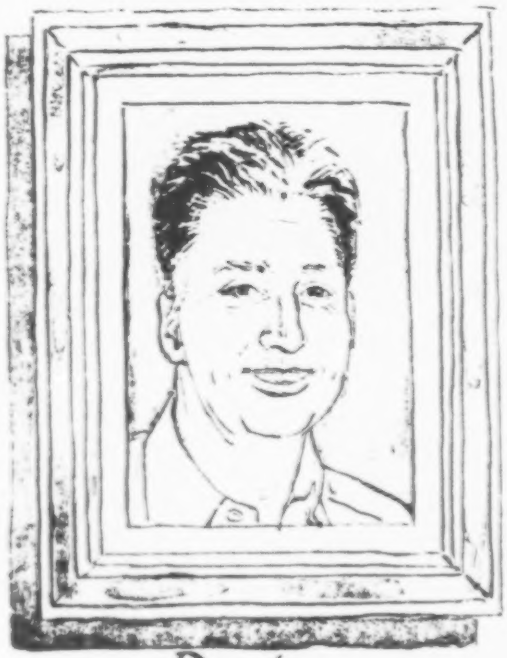
There's
M&M's Dad
Bobby Tucker's Mom
Grandma Manning.



Bobby Tucker's
Mom

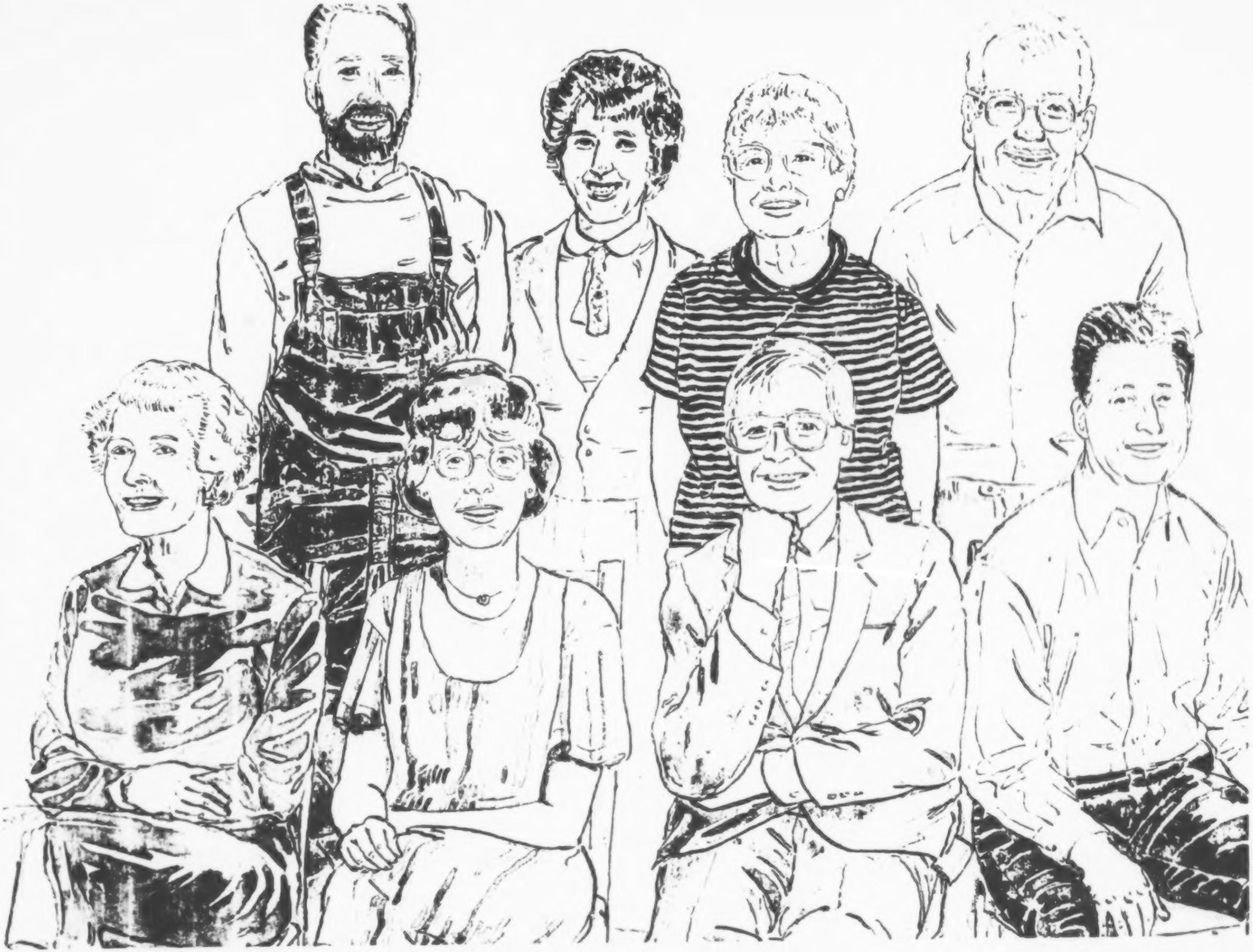


Grandma
Manning



Dad

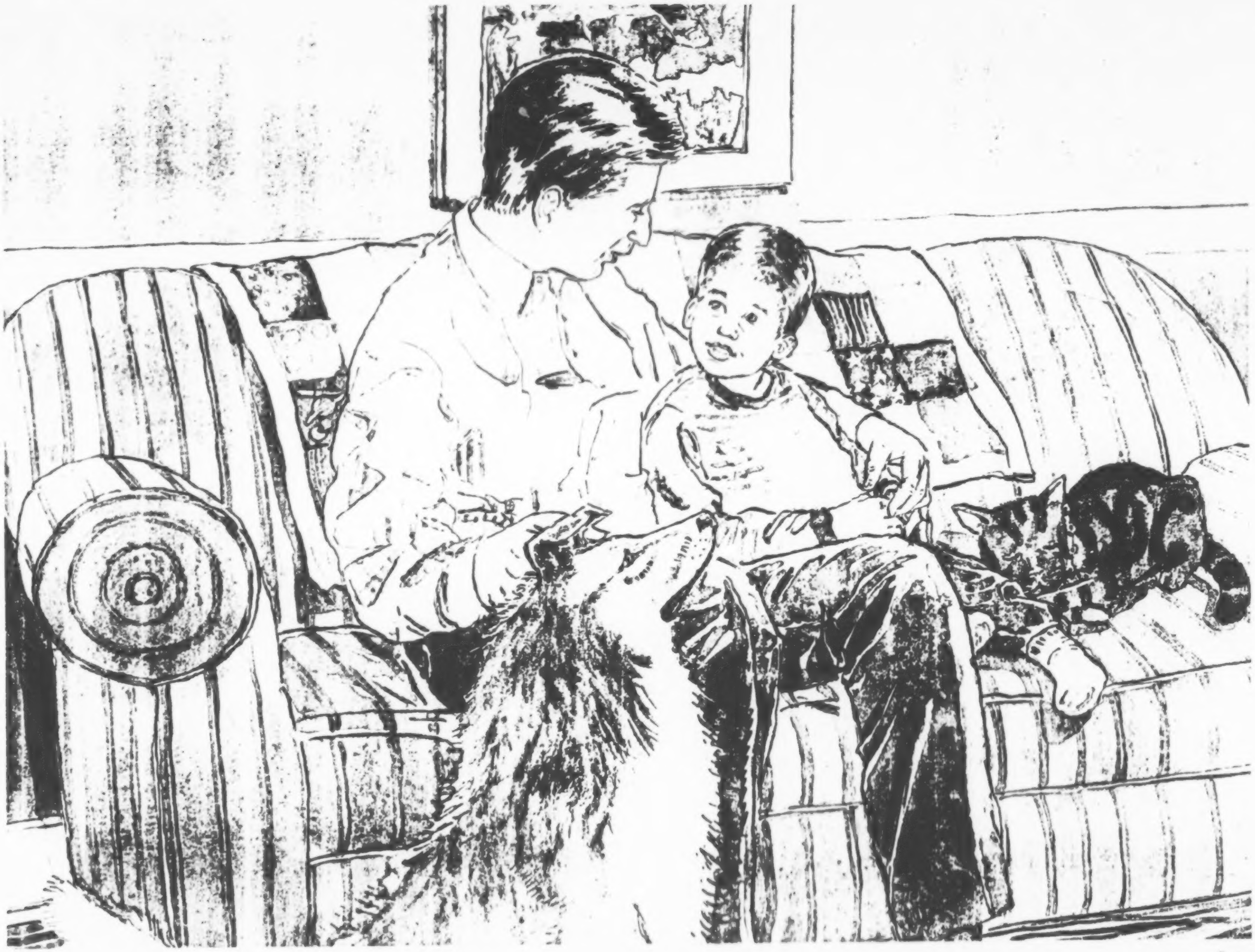
Can you find all the people who can drive M&M places?



"Do you have any other questions?" asks M&M's dad.

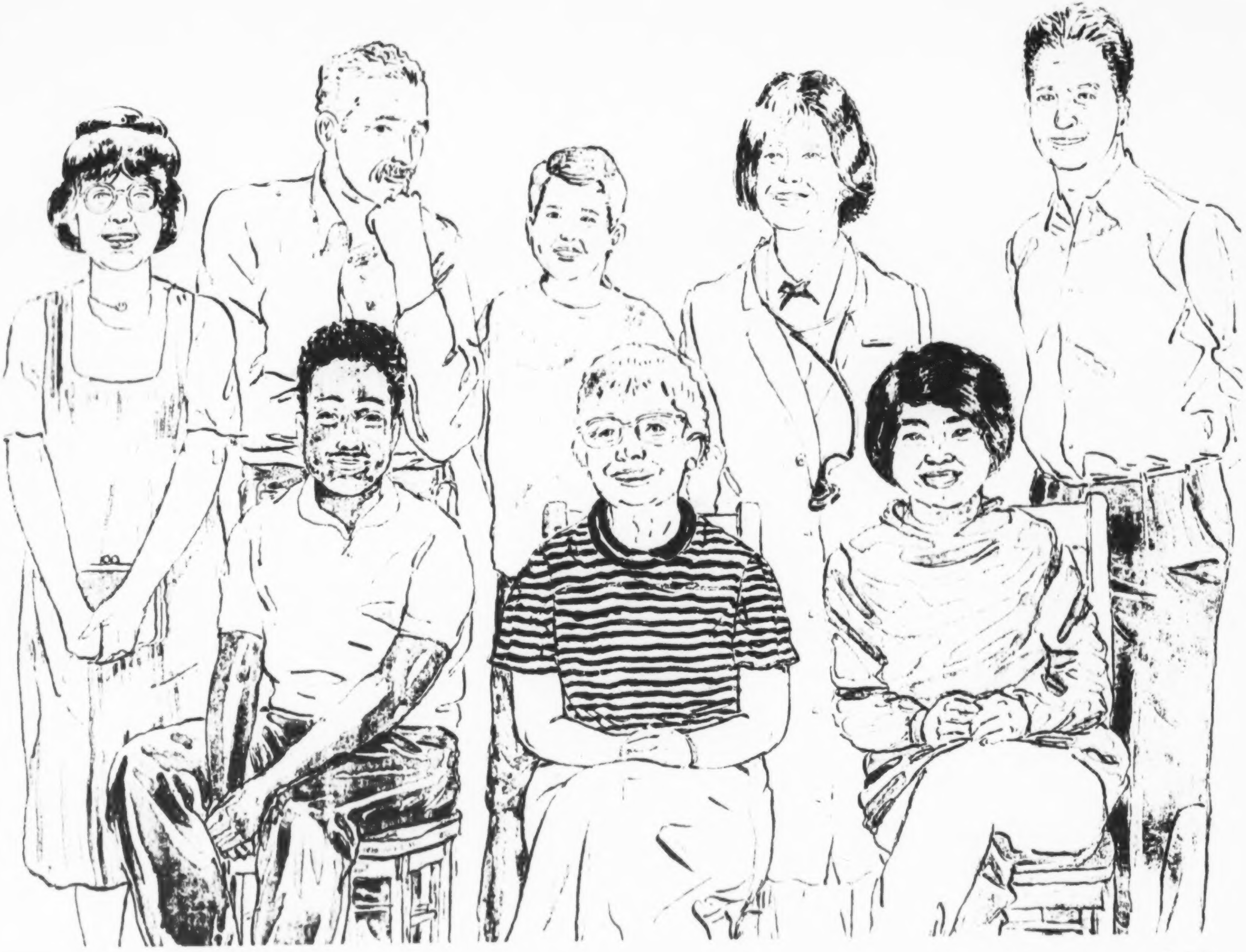
"No," says M&M. "I feel much better now.

I know all the people who can help me
get home from day care
take medicine when I'm sick
go places in their cars."



Can you find all the people who can help M&M do the things he can't do all by himself ?

THE END



Who Can Help Me?

Written by Laura J. Colker, Ed.D.
Illustrated by Robert Alan Soulé
Edited by Mary Lou Dogoloff
Anita Winters
Kathleen Curtis

Graphics and Layout by Stacey J. Reynolds
Project Evaluation by Raymond C. Collins, Ph.D.
Child Development Consultation by Charles H. Flatter, Ed.D.

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  Landover Hills, Maryland

Illustrator's Models

- John Quinn
- Ashley Quinn
- Taylor Quinn

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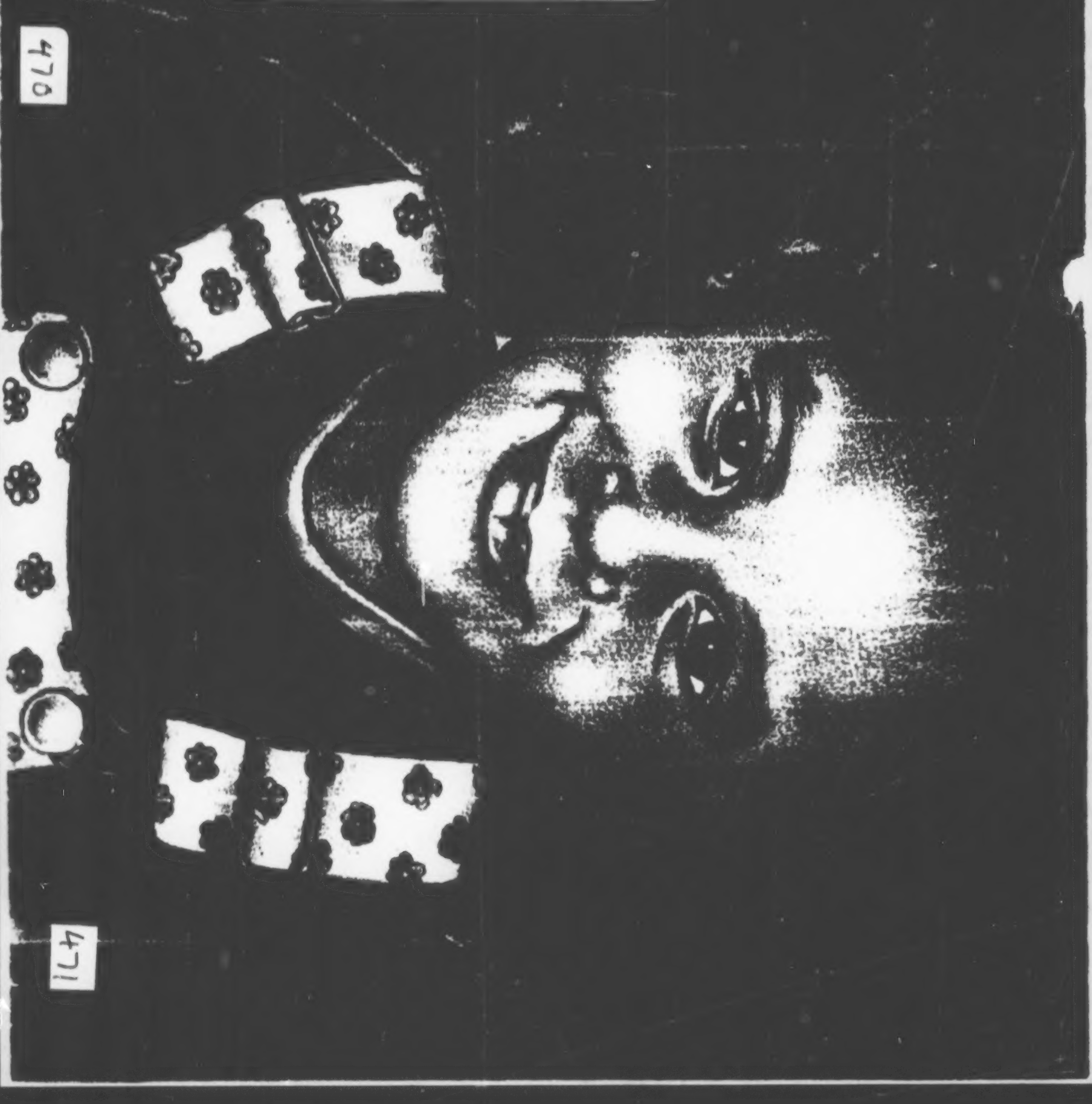
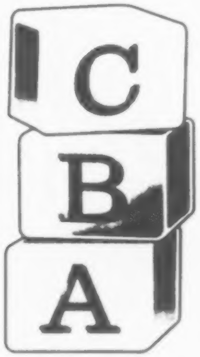
Keisha Ann: That's Who I Am

PS 024070



Keisha Ann: That's Who I Am

A Building Blocks Picture Book for Three-Year-Olds



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*H*i, hello.
How do you do?
I'd like to introduce
Myself to you.

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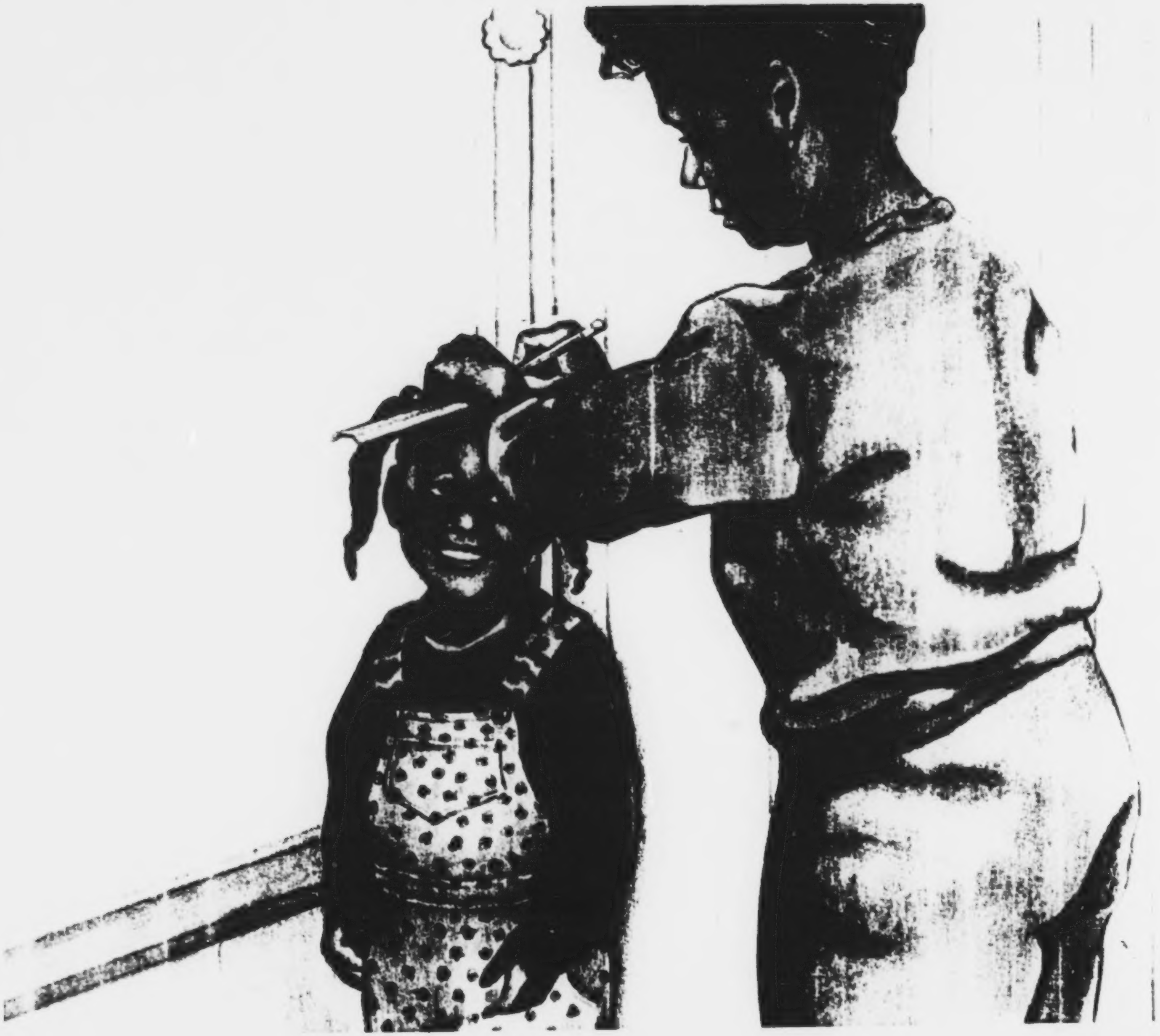
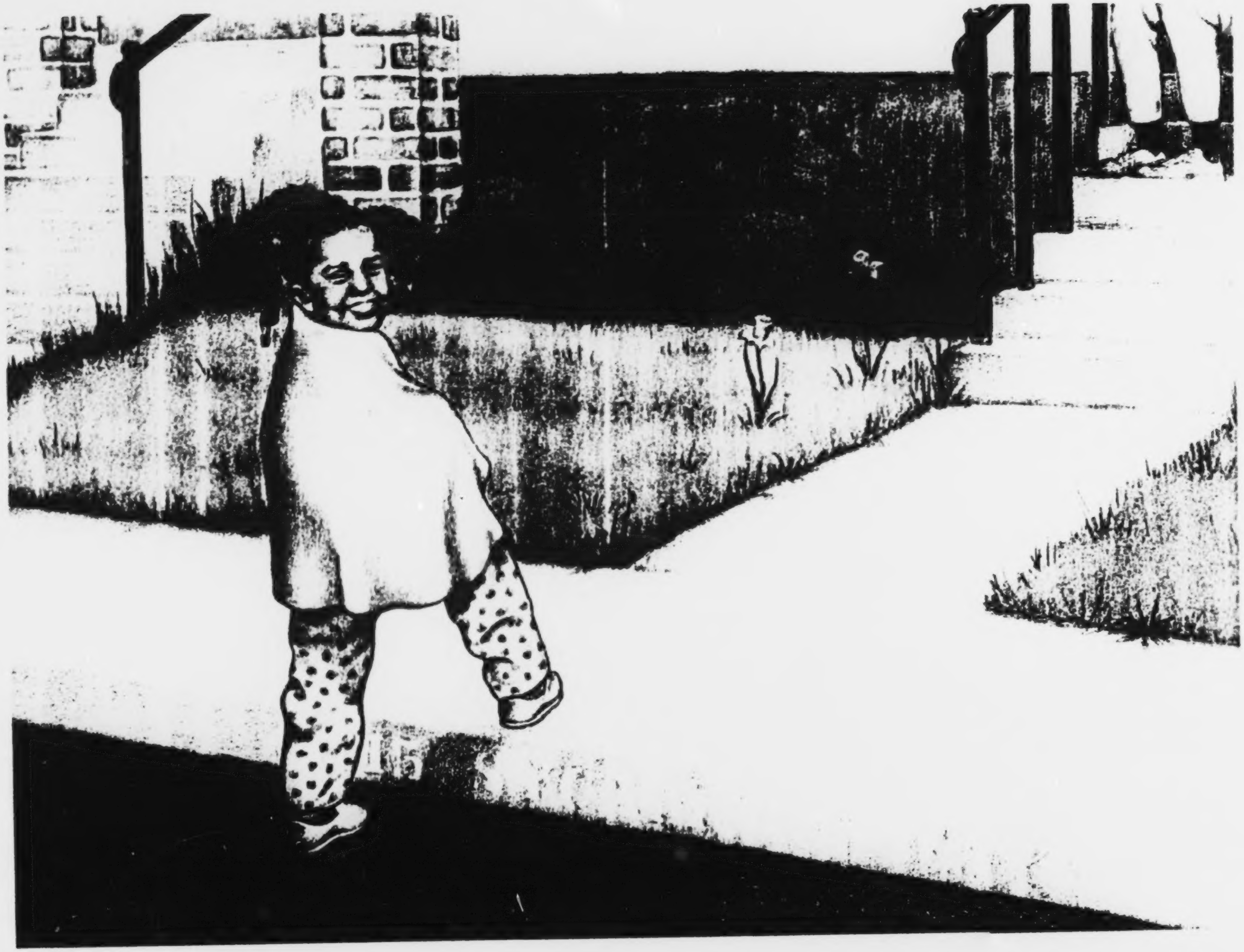
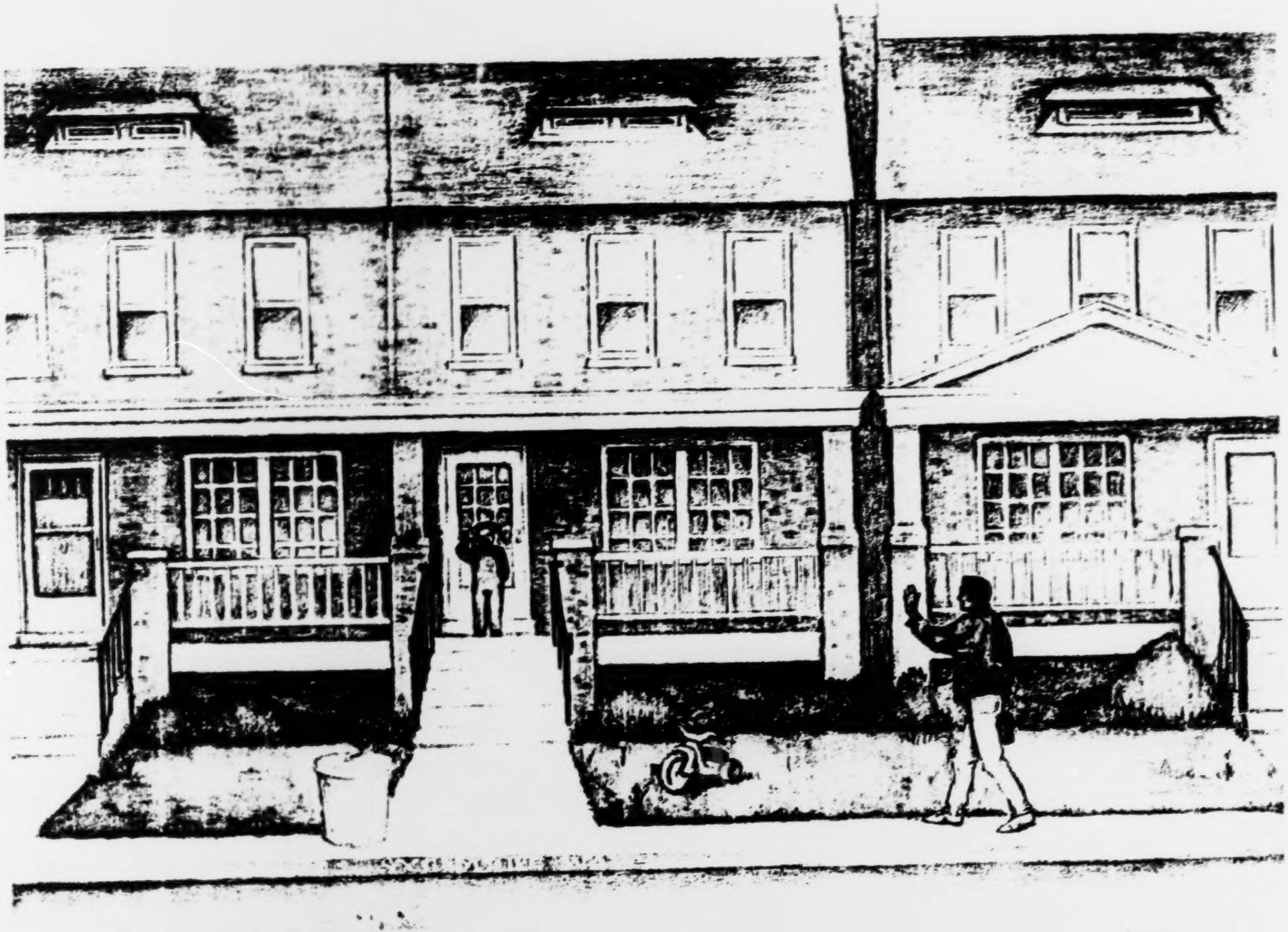
*M*ommy calls me "big girl."
Daddy calls me "sugar bun."
But neither is my real name.
They call me that for fun.



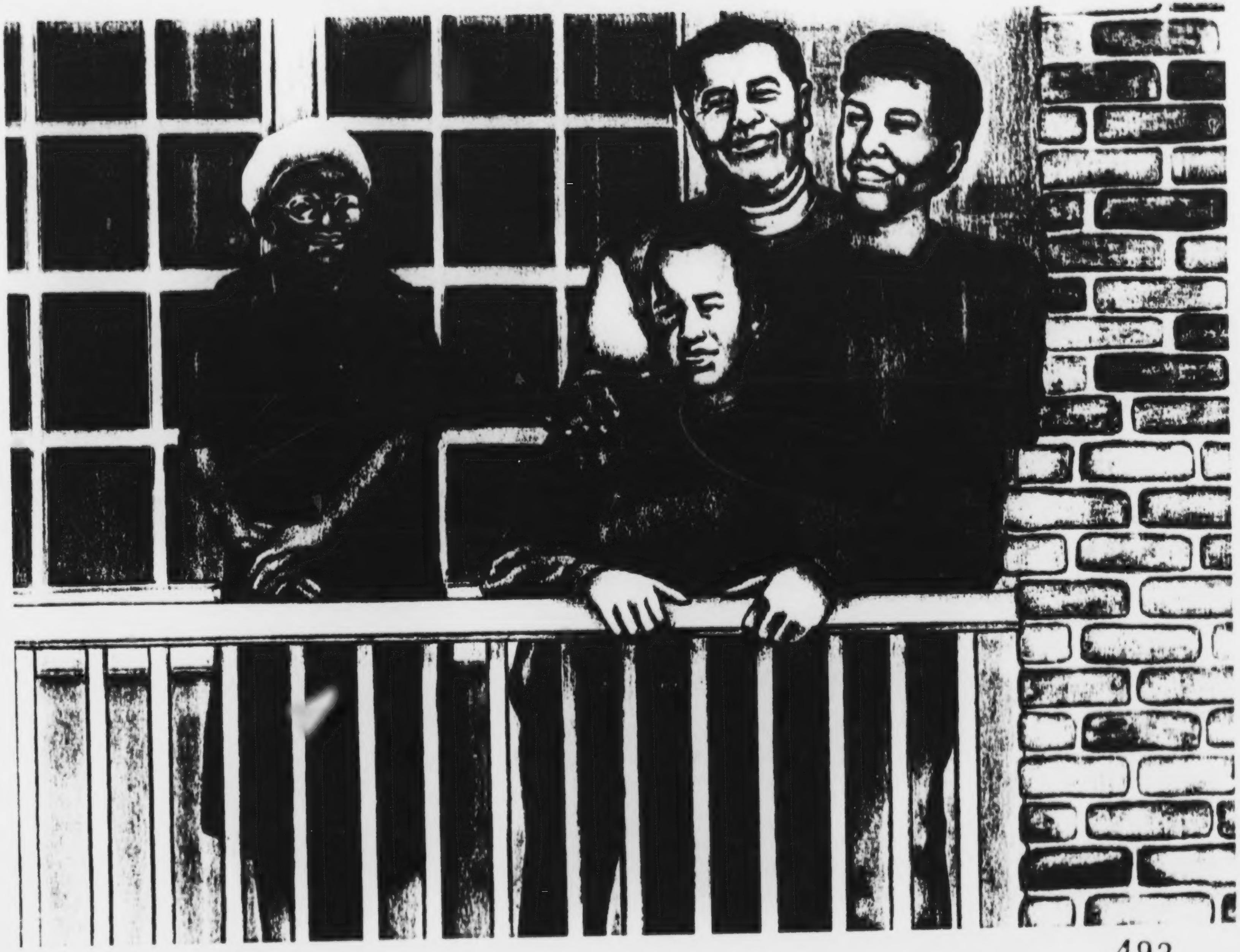
What's my name you wonder?
I'll tell you right away.
It's Keisha Ann Montgomery,
The "queen of Sycamore Way."


15

Welcome to my home
At 15 Sycamore Way.
It's where I sleep at night
And play throughout the day.



I live here with my mommy,
Daddy and brother Joe.
Over on the next street
Lives my Granny Flo.



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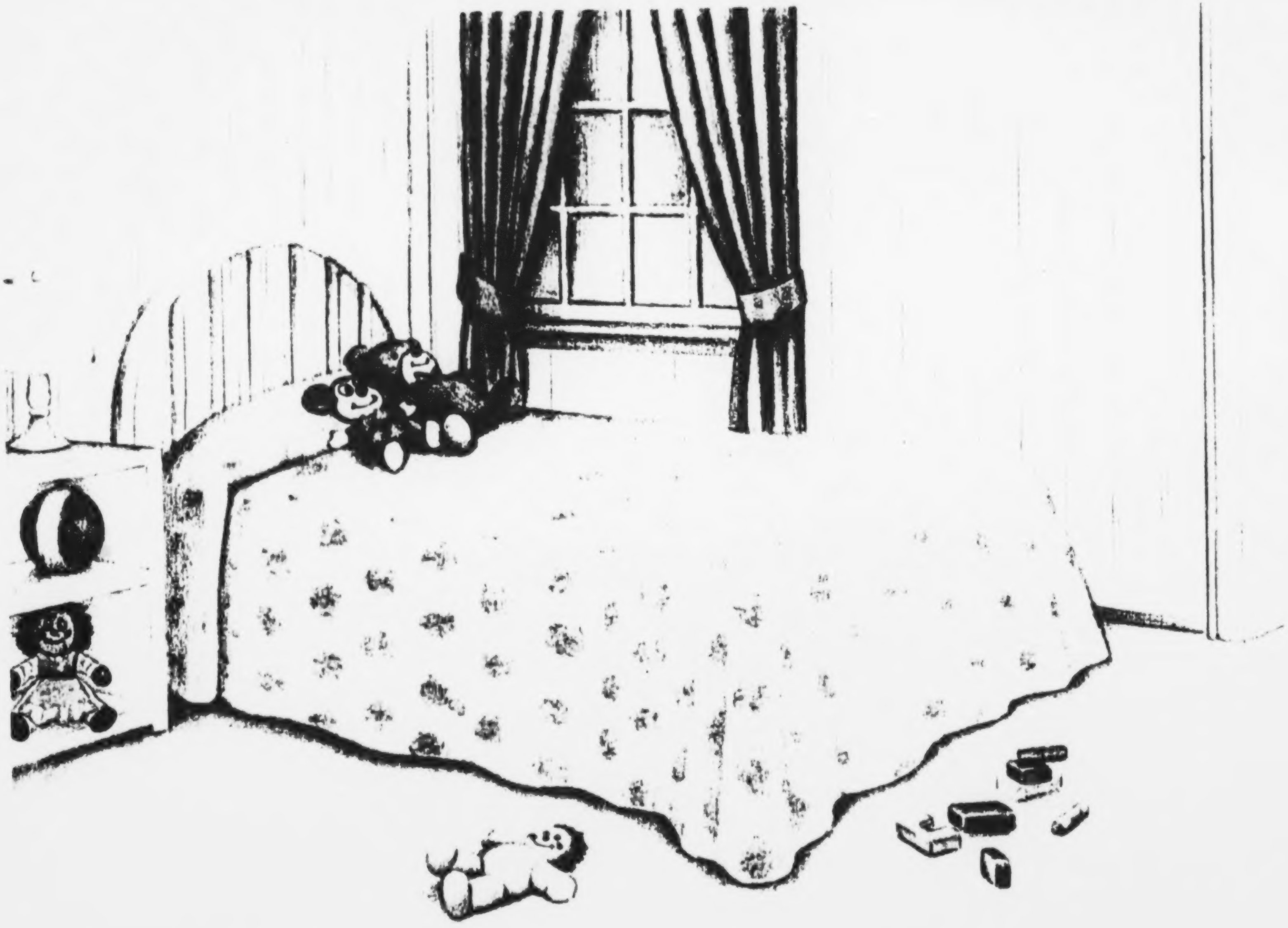
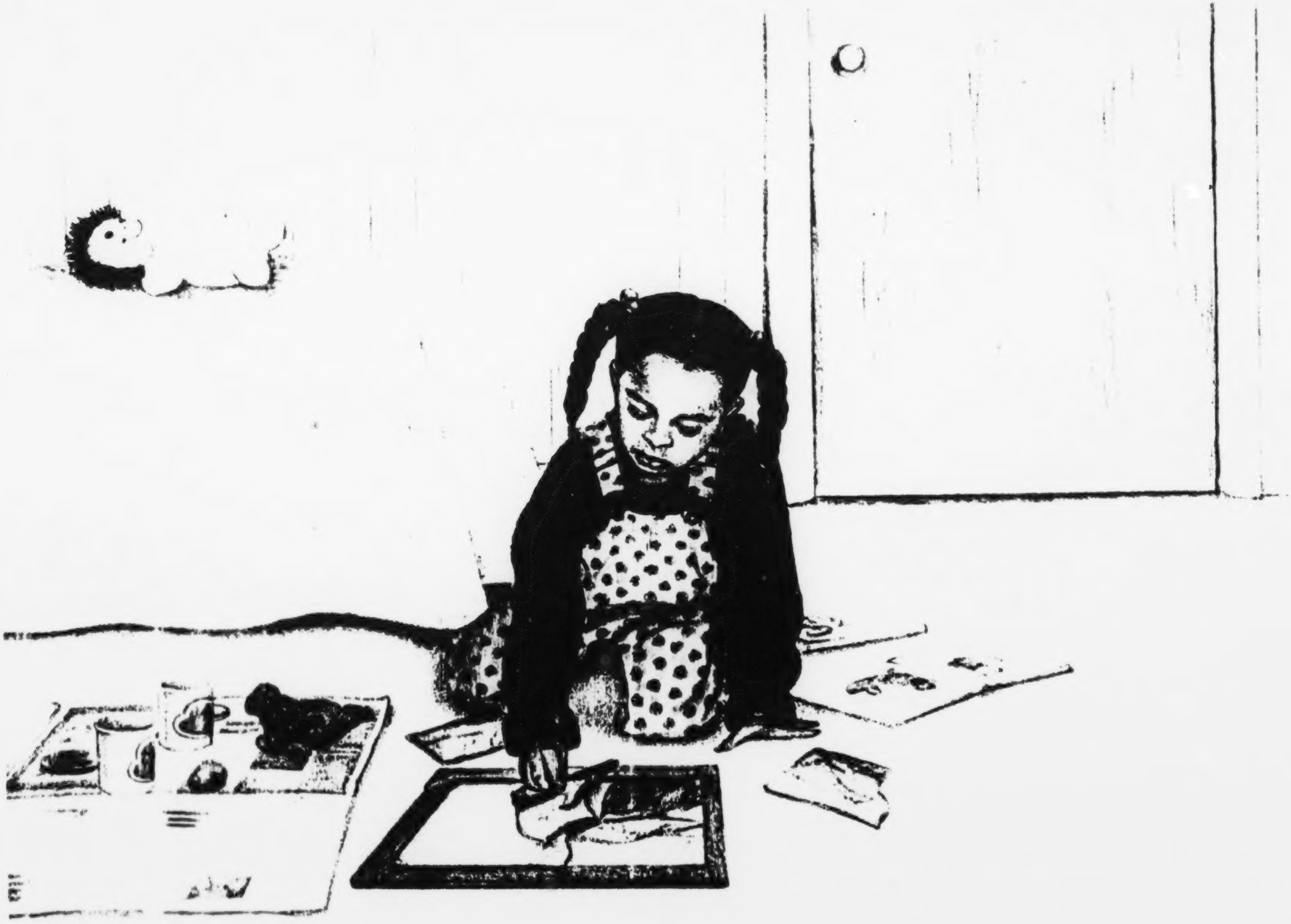
Come look into my bedroom
And see my favorite toys.
Sometimes I play here quietly
Sometimes I make noise.

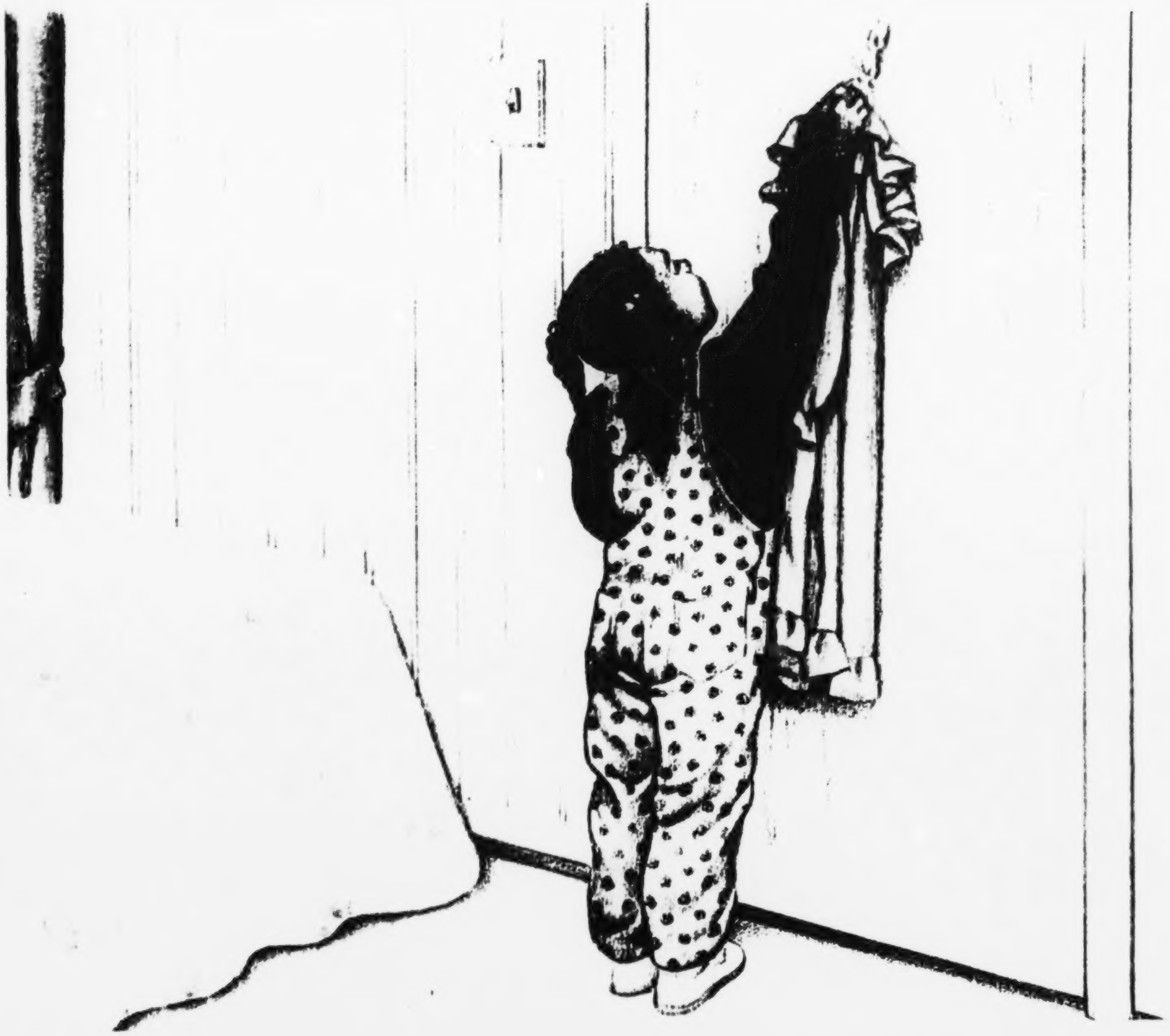


I love to look at story books
And do puzzles every day.
I build towers out of blocks
And make dinosaurs of clay.

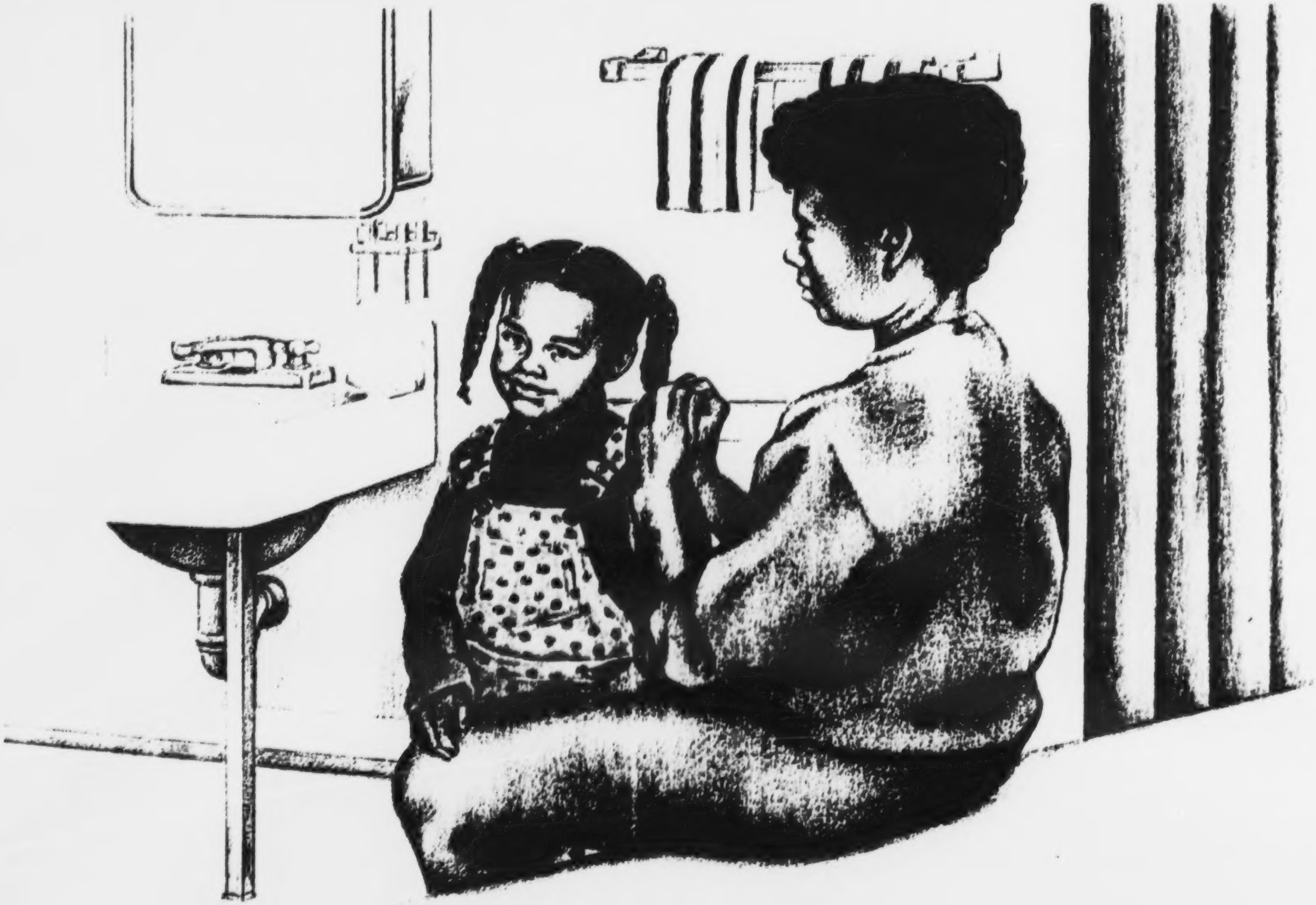


500 501

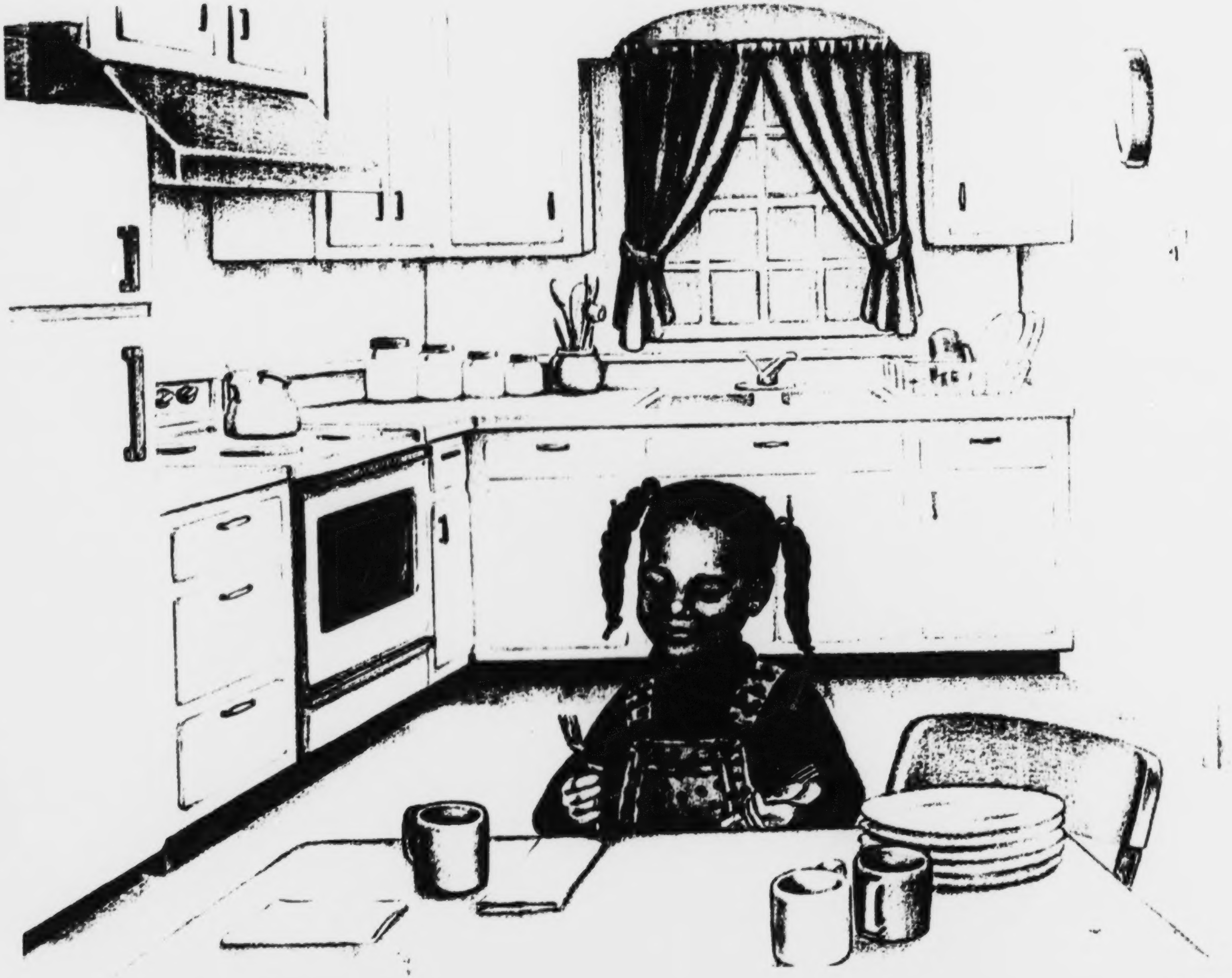
It's great to be three years old
I'm not a baby anymore.
I get dressed with no one's help
And hang my nightie on the door.



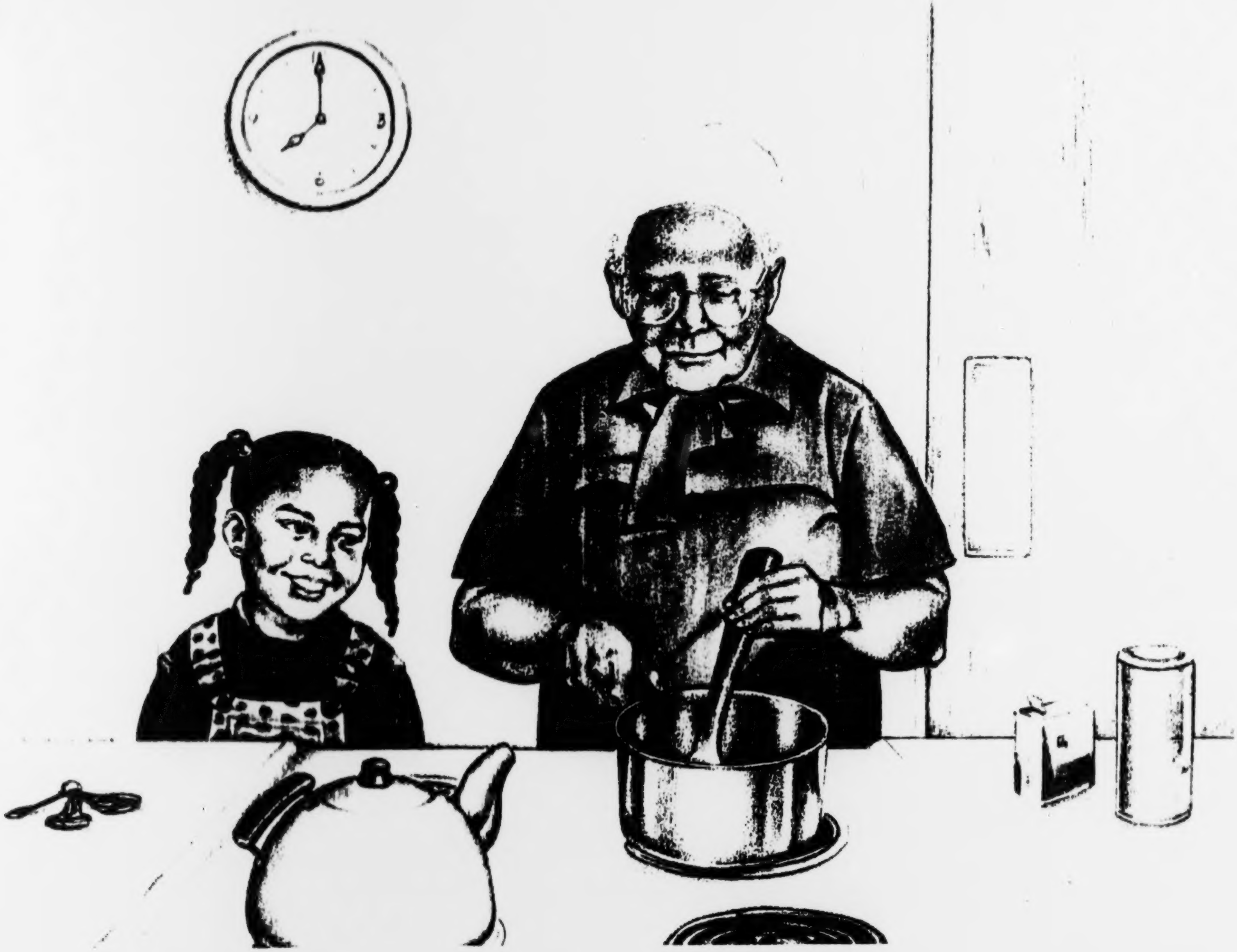
The bathroom is a private place
Where I brush my teeth with care.
I wash my face and dry my hands
Then help Mommy braid my hair.



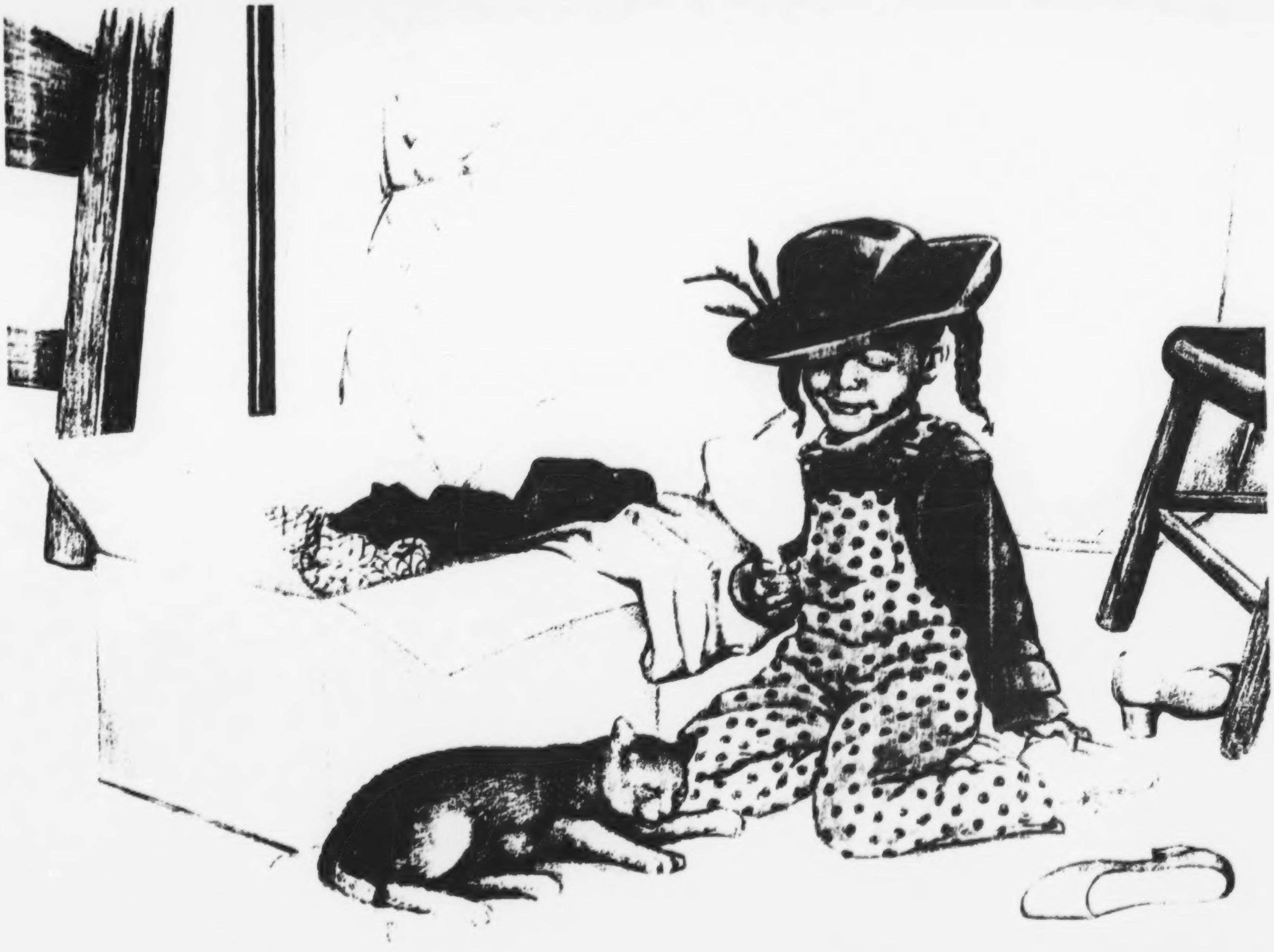
This is my family's kitchen.
Where I eat meals every day.
I help by setting the table
And clearing plates away.



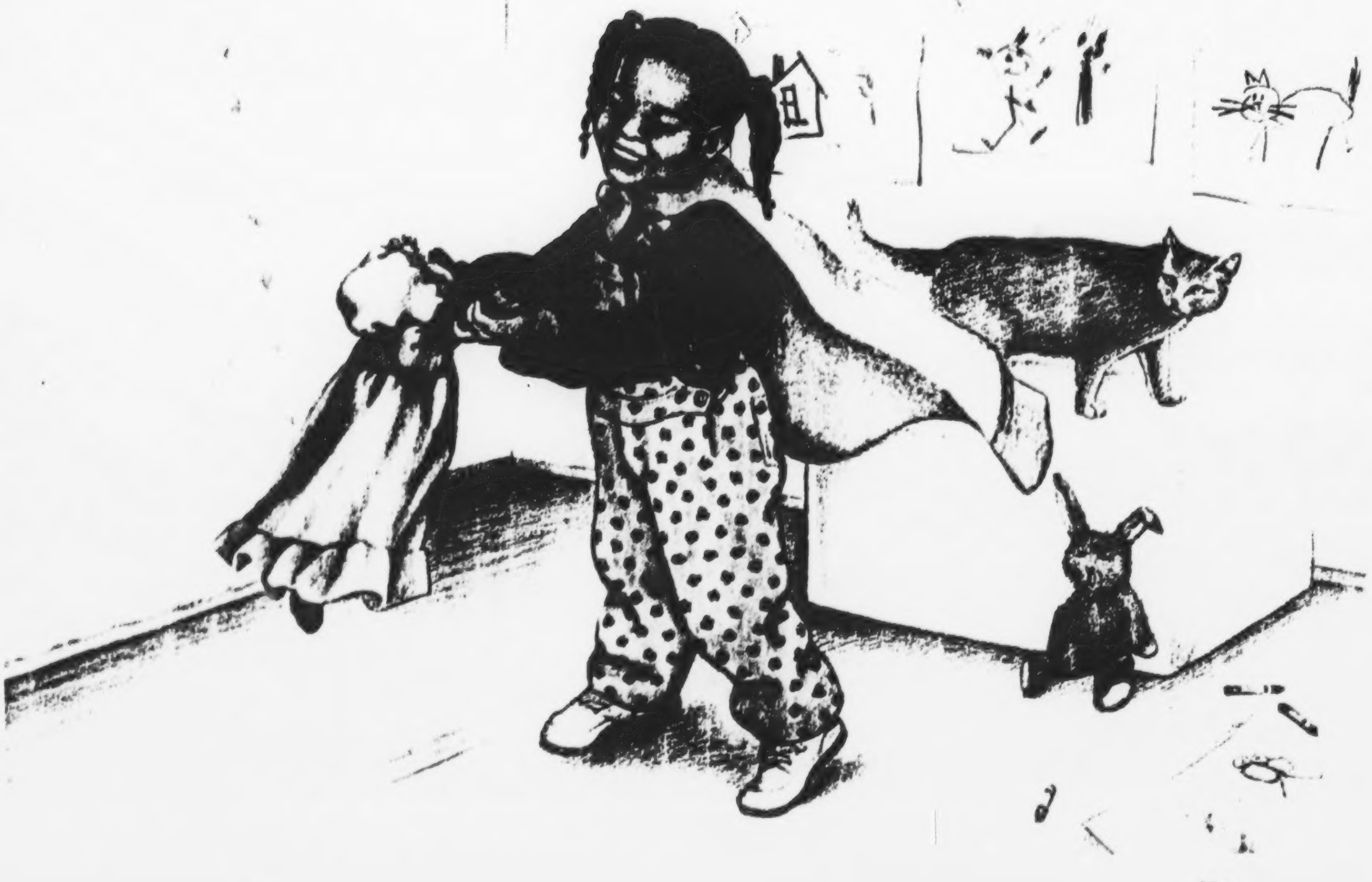
Granny told me this morning,
Since I'm as grown up as I am,
She will show me how to make
Oatmeal, toast and ham.



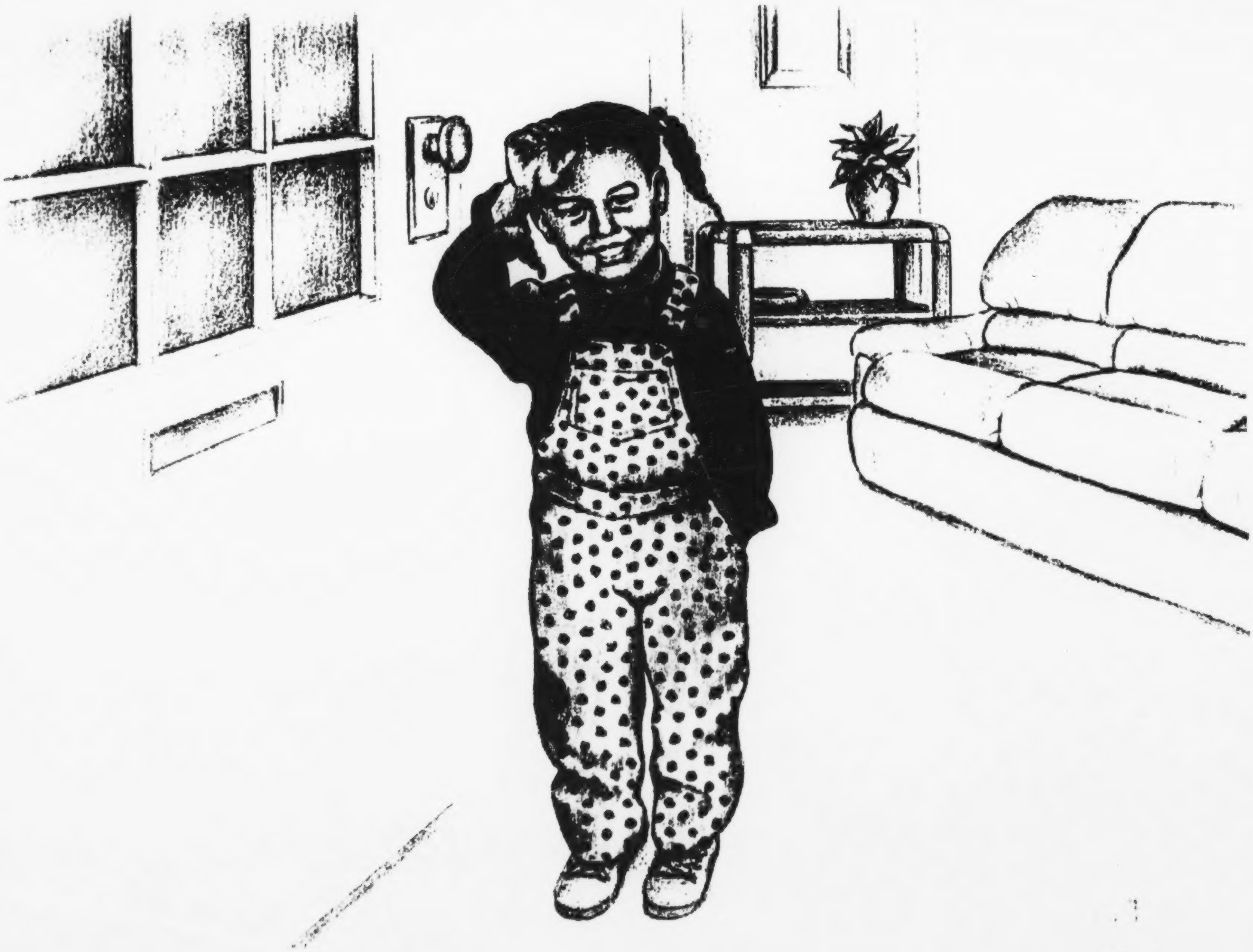
This is my special place
For Fuzzy cat and me.
Mommy takes us here.
Where there's lots to do and see.



And here we can be ourselves
And dance and sing and play,
And dream of happy times ahead
For the "queen of Sycamore Way."



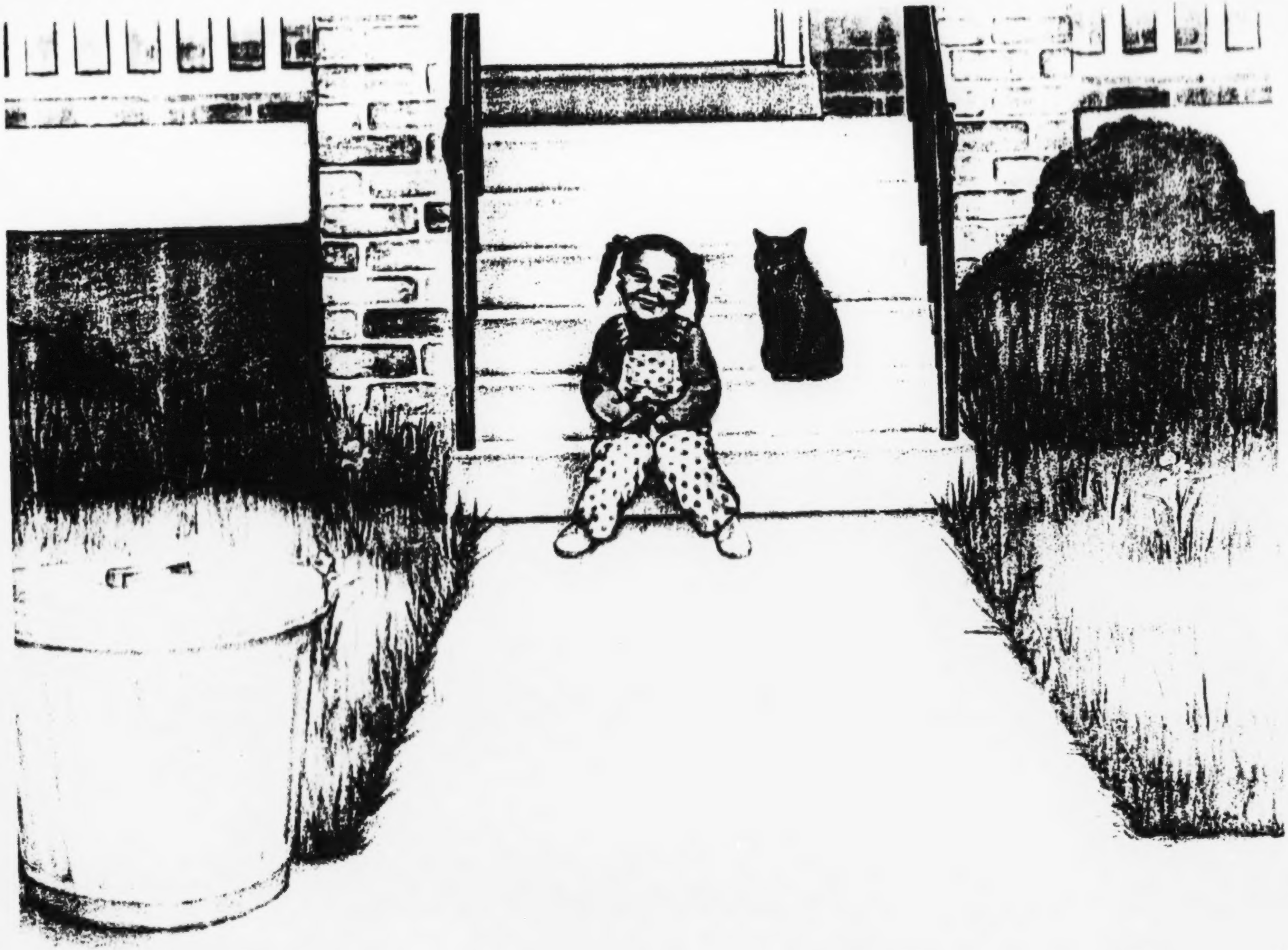
I've had such fun talking
About myself and what I do.
But now it's time to listen
And hear all about you.



Who are you?
Can you tell me:
Your name?
About your home?
About your room?
About your bathroom?
About your kitchen?
About your special place?

Your Friend,
Keisha Ann
(That's who I am.)

THE END



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  Landover Hills, Maryland

Illustrator's Models

- Colin Ball
- Steven Ball
- Phillis Johnson-Ball

Building Blocks: Helping Preschoolers Grow Up Alcohol and Drug Free

Picture Books for Three-Year-Olds

Keisha Ann: That's Who I Am
Who Can Help Me?

Picture Books for Four-Year-Olds

Get Ready . . . Here I Go
I'm Such a Big Help!

Picture Books for Five-Year-Olds

Super Duper Timmy Cooper
Denton's Detectives

Guide for Parents

Guide for Caregivers

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Jess and Jamie Get the Mail

THE
READY, SET, GO!

Adventure Book

PS 024070

This project has been funded by the U.S. Department of Education under contract number RP91006003.

Researched, written and designed by RMC Research Corporation,
1000 Market Street, Portsmouth, New Hampshire 03801

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Jess and Jamie Get the Mail
The Ready, Set, Go! Adventure Book

Dear Parents:

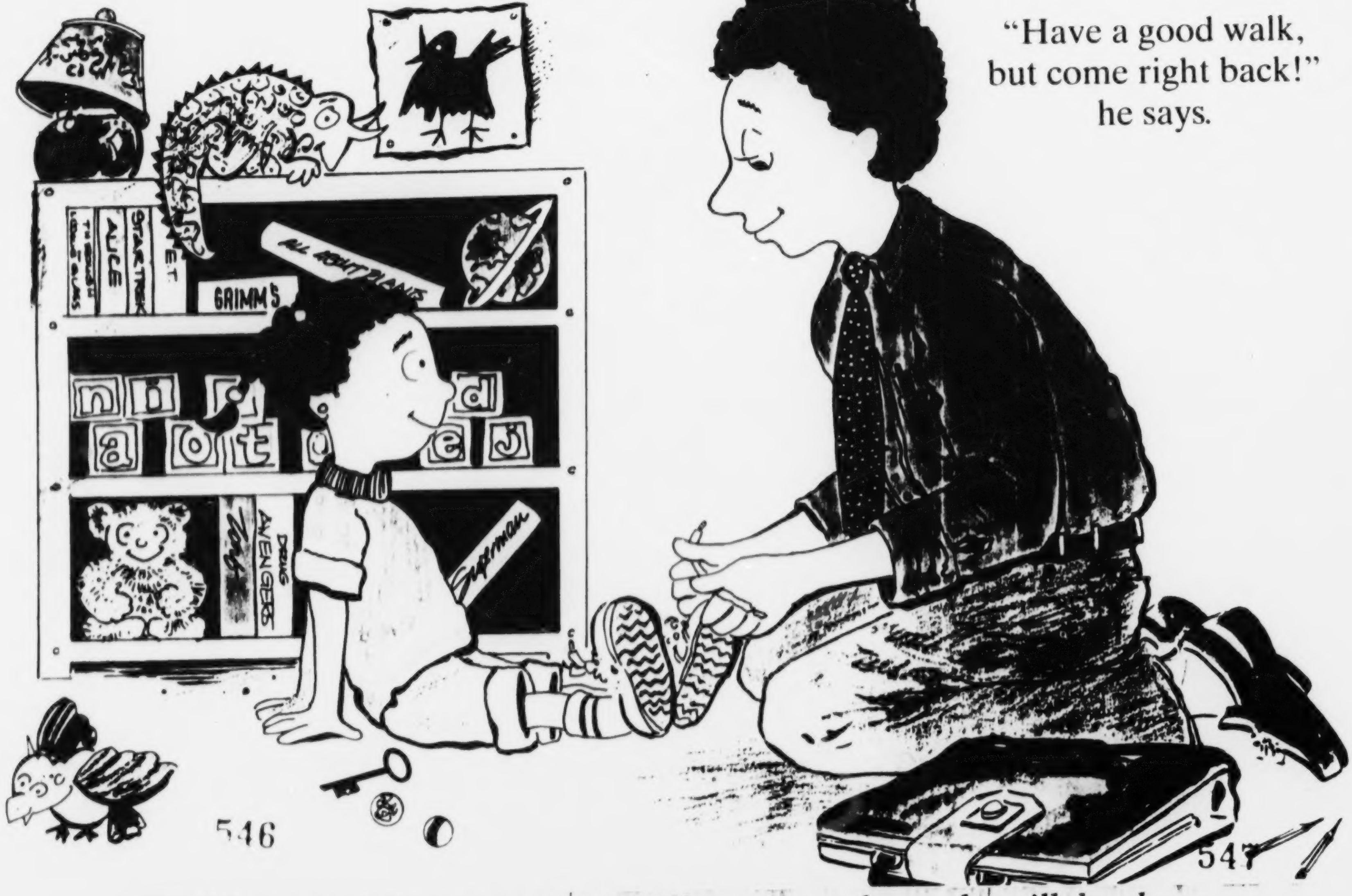
This adventure book contains messages and ideas for preschool children that will help them learn to be healthy and safe. Young children who understand these ideas and use them in their lives have a better chance of staying drug free when they grow up.

Each part of the adventure has a message at the bottom of the page that deals with the experiences Jess and Jamie are having. Help your child read the story. Then talk about the message on each page. To get the messages across, ask your child questions. And then connect the ideas to your own lives.

Although Jess and Jamie may be older than your child, and your child may not be old enough to go on an errand like the one described in this story, the messages are still relevant and important to all children, even those who are three or four years old. We encourage you to teach these messages to your child now to build a strong foundation of healthy thinking. Reading the adventure book over and over again with your children will help them remember the messages.

We hope this story will help your children as they grow up to live their own adventures!

Jamie is getting ready to get the mail.
Her Dad ties her shoes — in double knots.

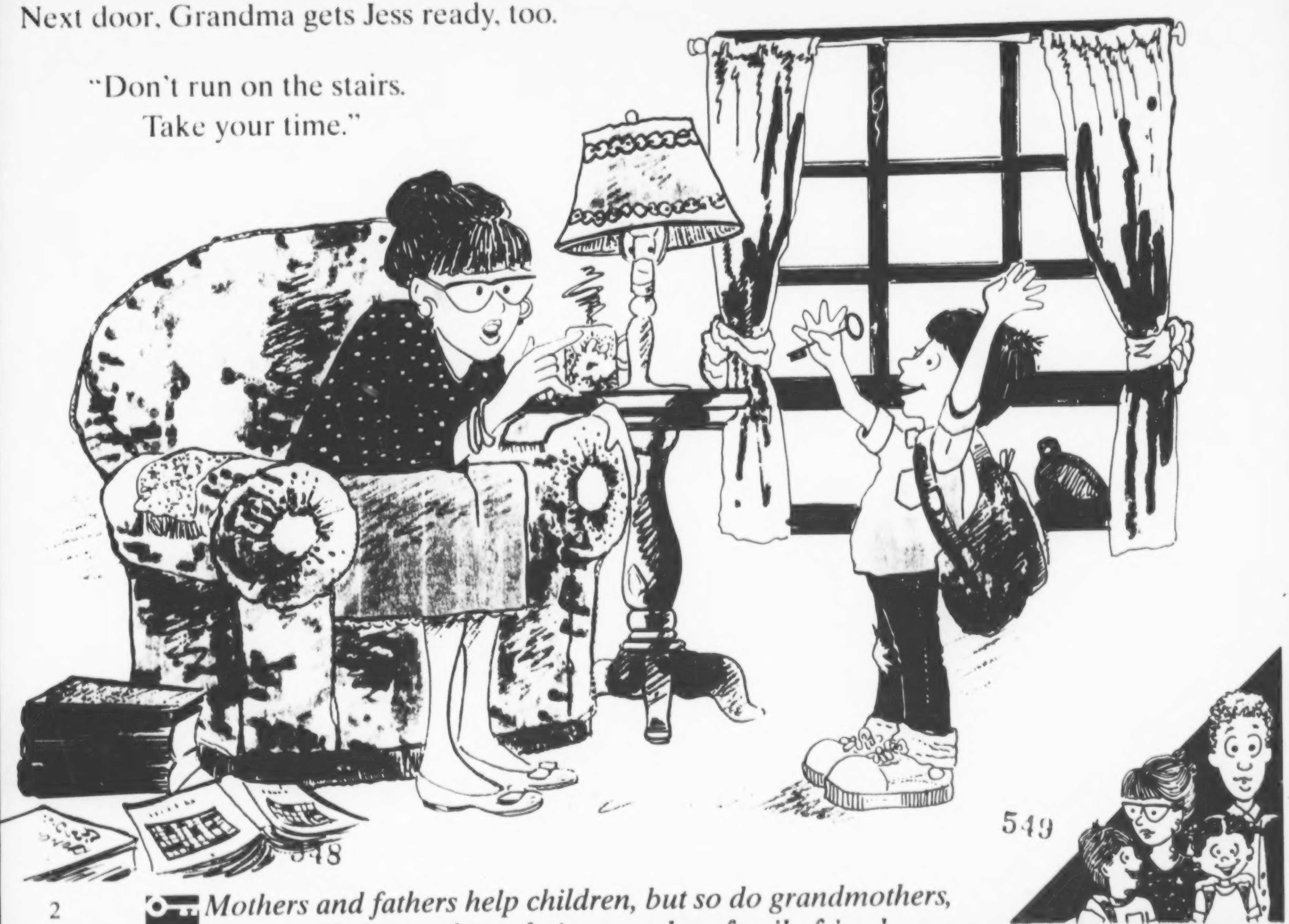

E.T.
STAR TREK
ALICE
GRIMM'S
ALL ABOUT PLANETS
AVENGERS
Superman

"Have a good walk,
but come right back!"
he says.

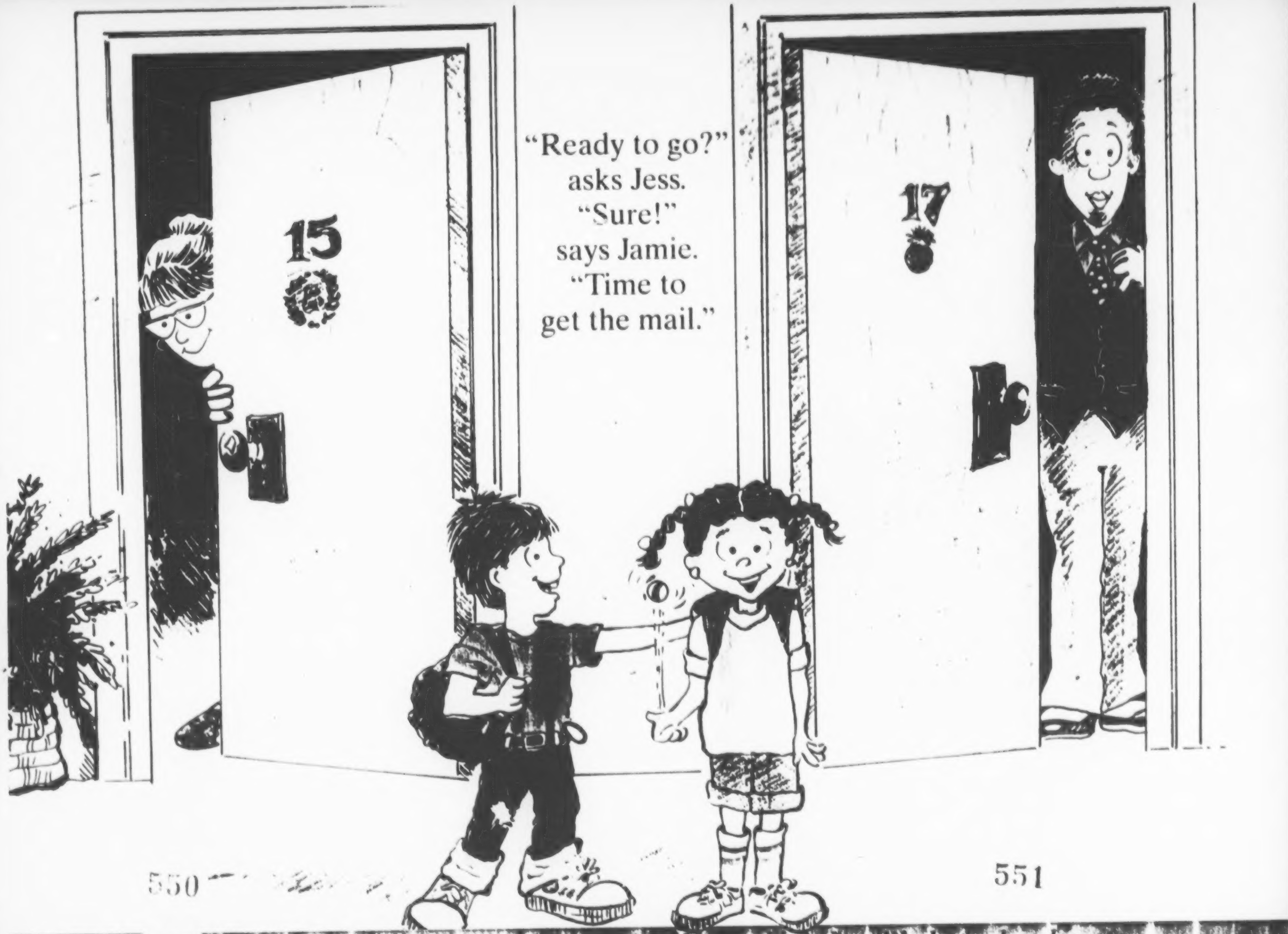
When you help your child in different ways, he or she will develop a sense of being safe and secure.

Next door, Grandma gets Jess ready, too.

"Don't run on the stairs.
Take your time."

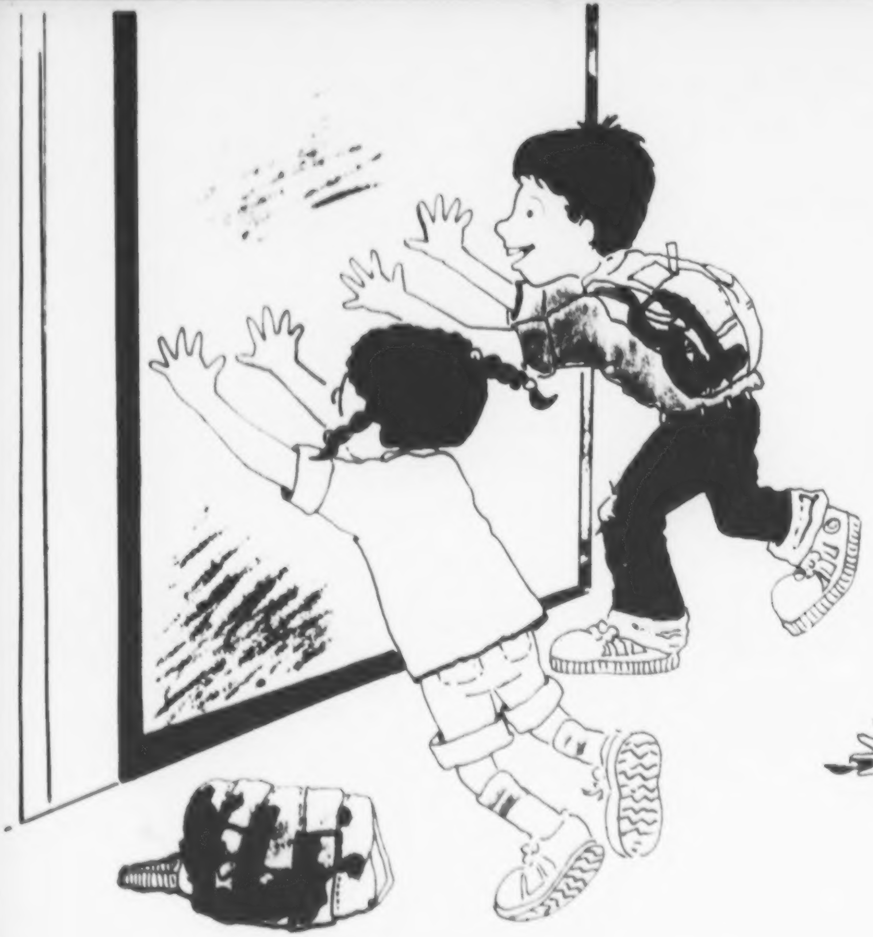


Mothers and fathers help children, but so do grandmothers,



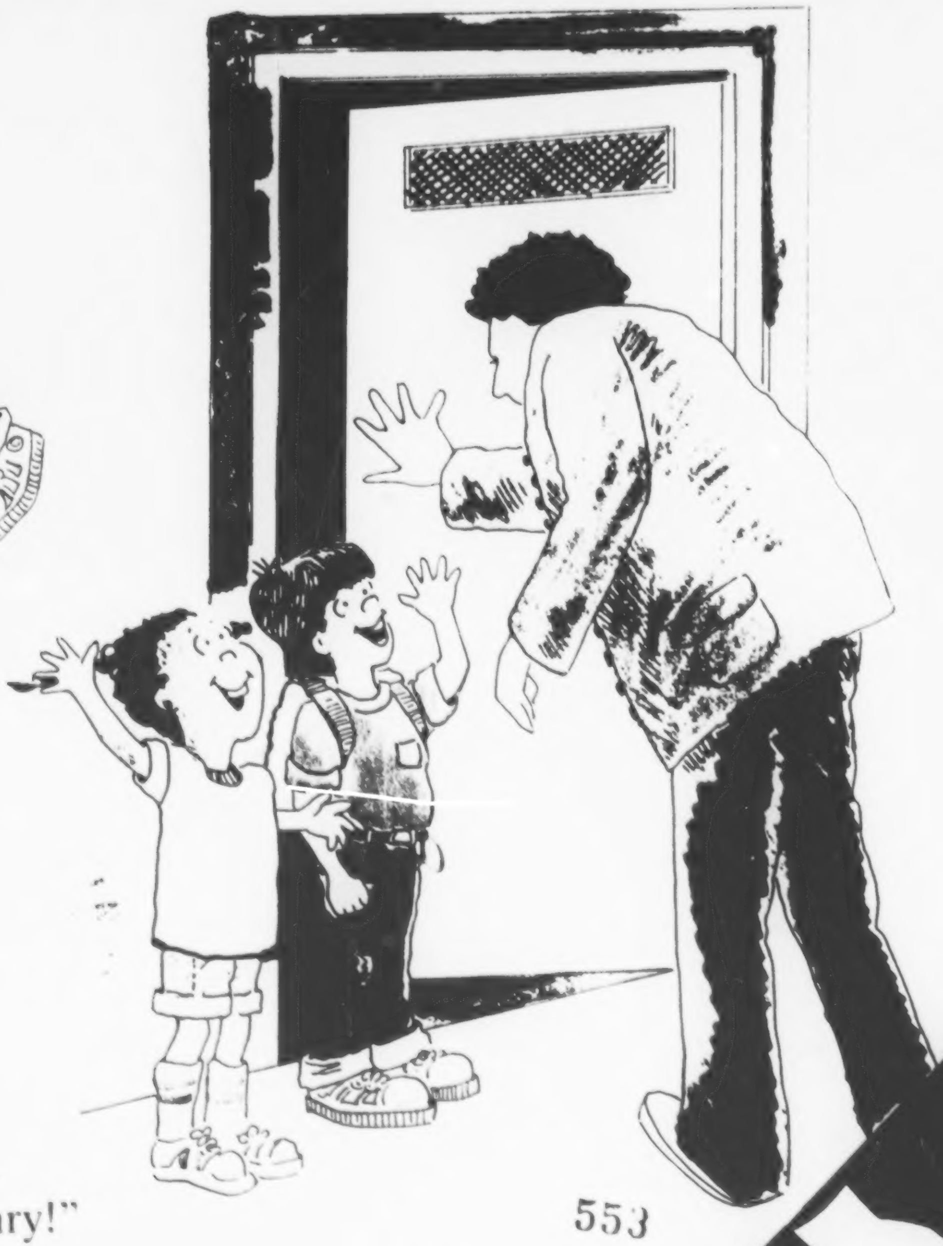
"Ready to go?"
asks Jess.
"Sure!"
says Jamie.
"Time to
get the mail."

If your child has healthy friendships he or she is less likely to develop problems with alcohol and other drugs later in life.



Jess and Jamie try to push
open the door to the stairs.

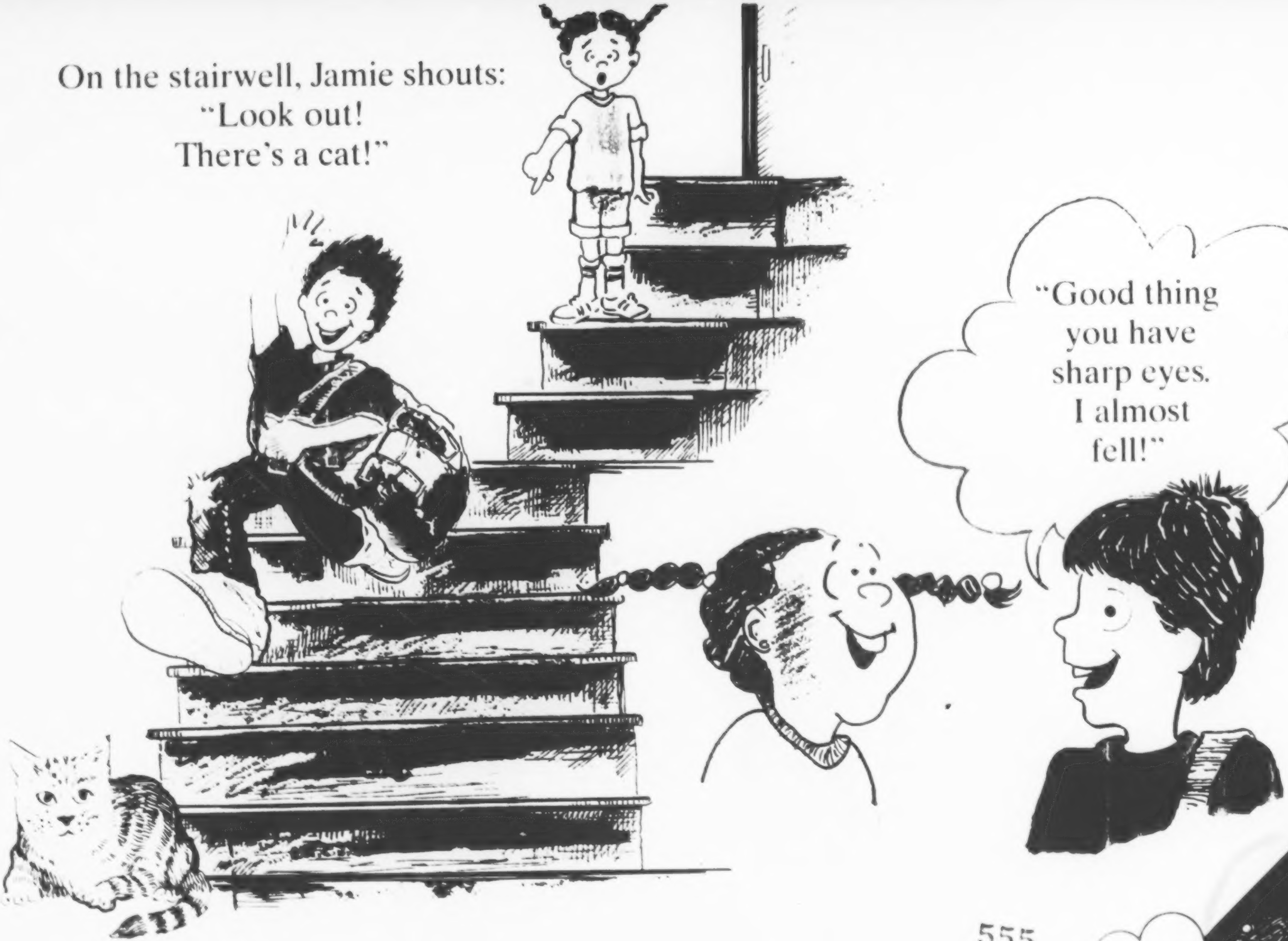
"The door is too heavy!"



Mr. Henry helps.
"Thank you, Mr. Henry!"

Your child needs to know that other adults are usually helpful, but a child

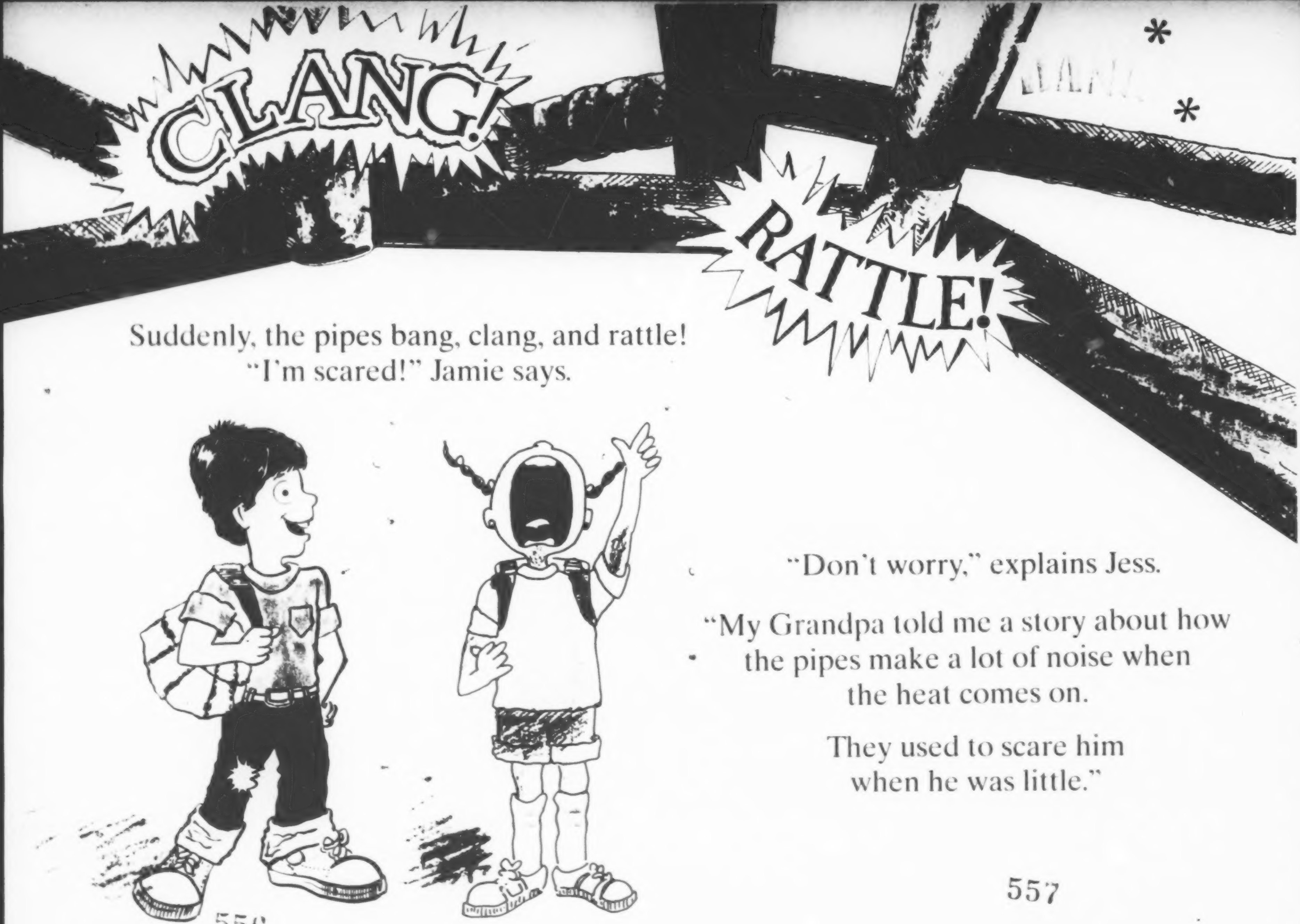
On the stairwell, Jamie shouts:
"Look out!
There's a cat!"


"Good thing
you have
sharp eyes.
I almost
fell!"

554

555

There are good things about every child. Praise your child on a regular basis.


CLANG!
RATTLE!

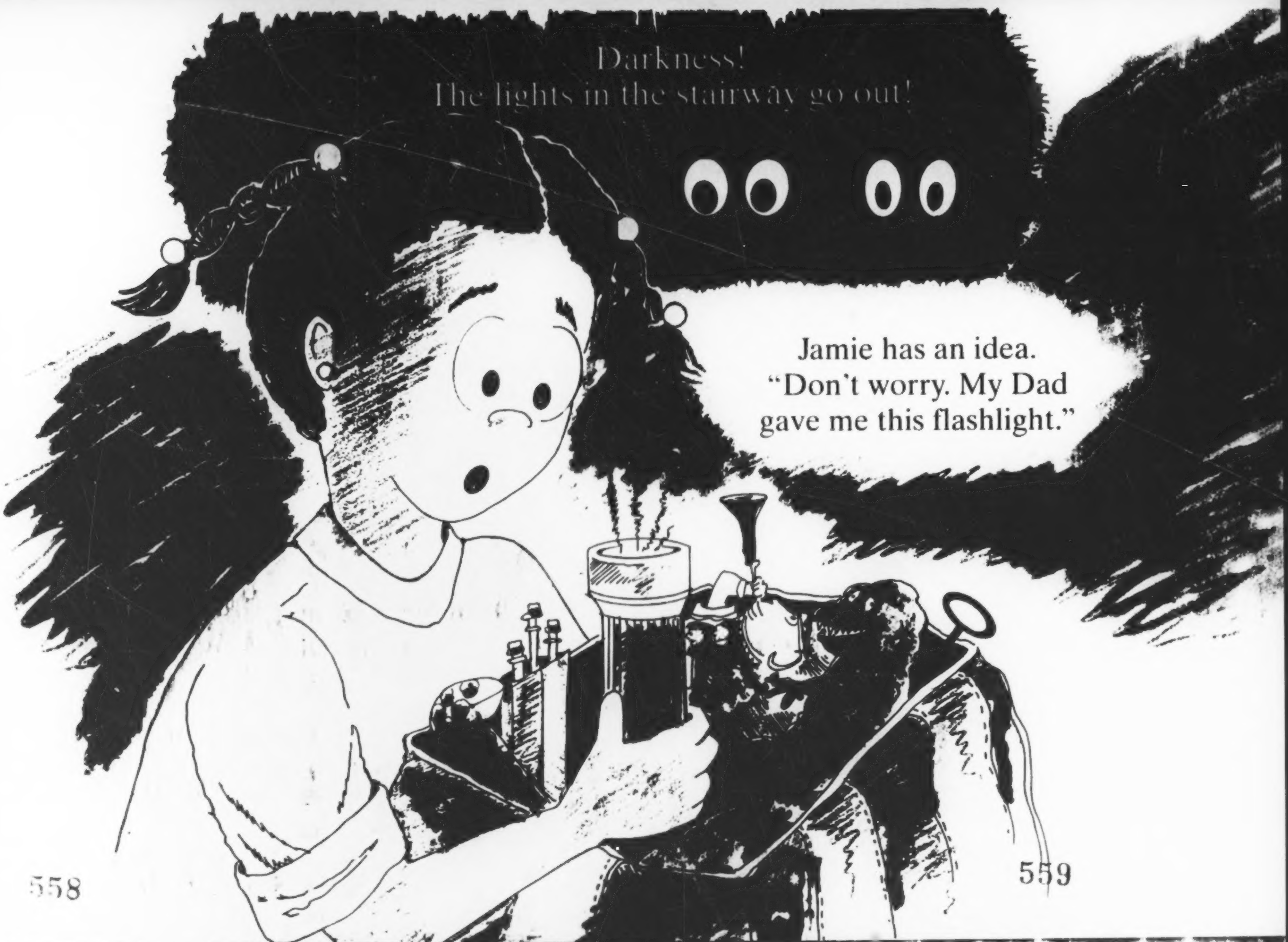
Suddenly, the pipes bang, clang, and rattle!
"I'm scared!" Jamie says.

"Don't worry," explains Jess.

"My Grandpa told me a story about how the pipes make a lot of noise when the heat comes on.

They used to scare him when he was little."

Reading and telling stories helps build your relationship with your child, and a healthy parent-child relationship is part of a foundation for a drug-free life.



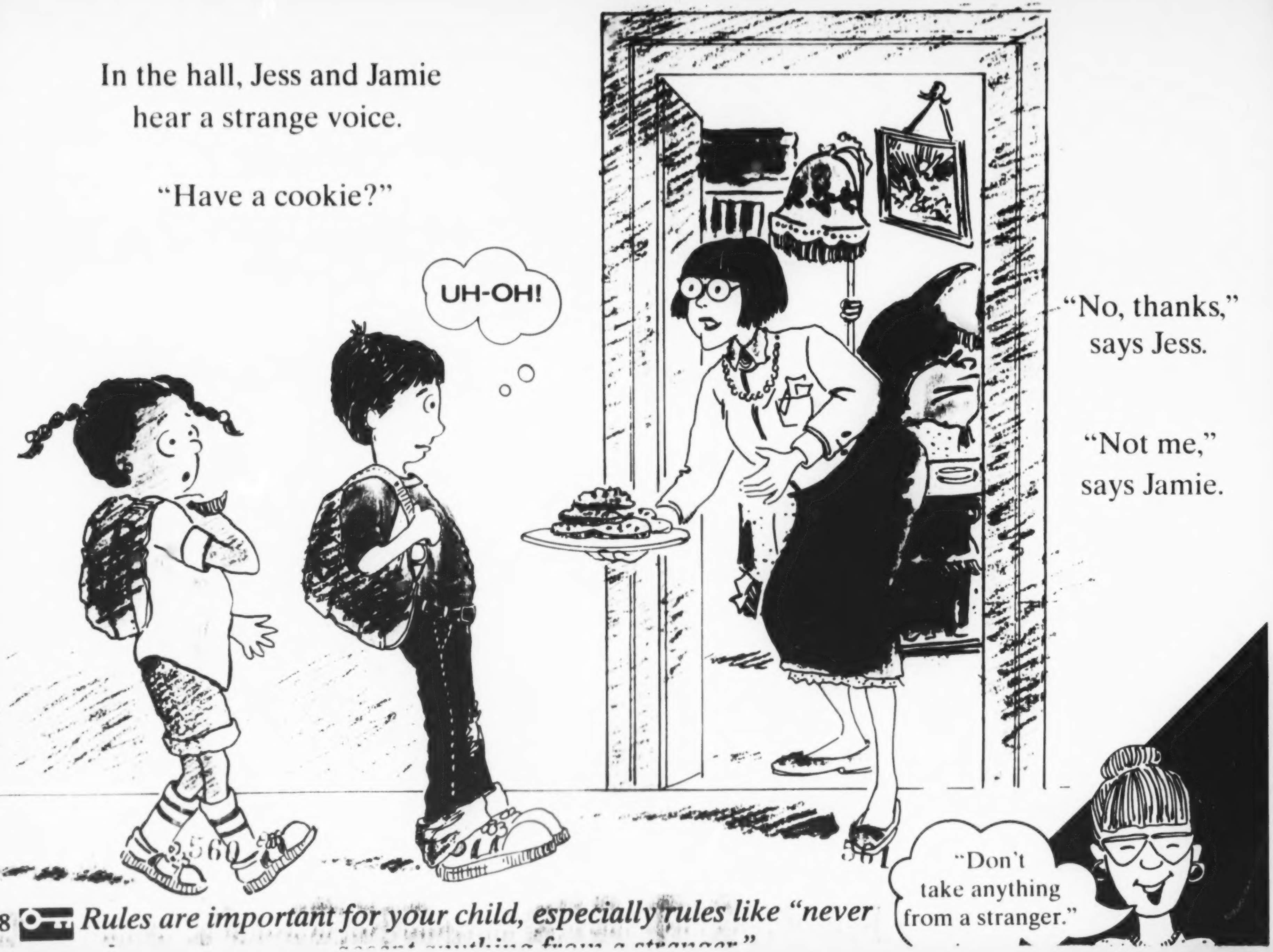
Darkness!
The lights in the stairway go out!

Jamie has an idea.
“Don’t worry. My Dad
gave me this flashlight.”

Teach your child skills and provide what he or she needs to be safe when you’re not around.

In the hall, Jess and Jamie
hear a strange voice.

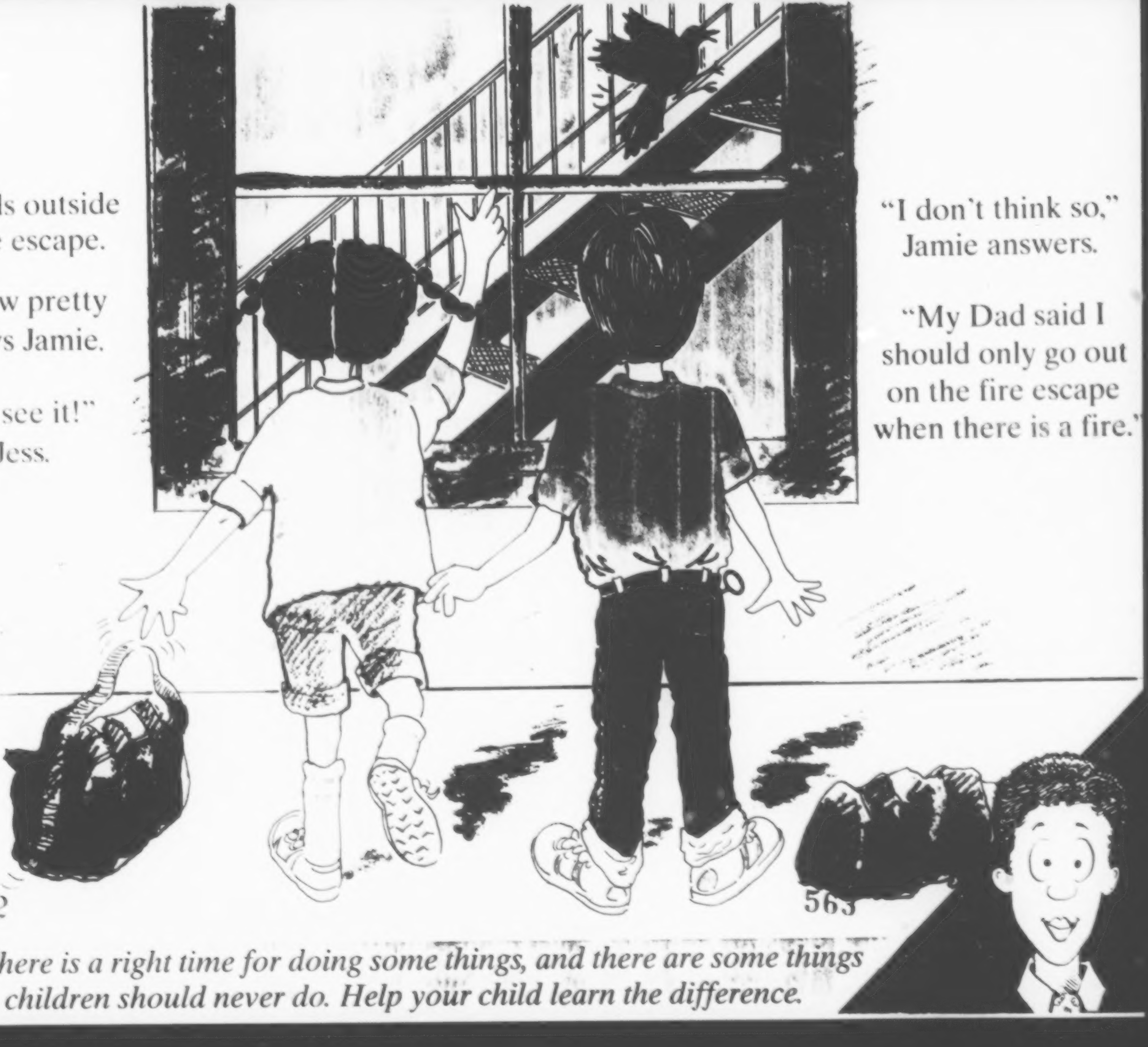
"Have a cookie?"


UH-OH!
"Don't take anything from a stranger."

"No, thanks,"
says Jess.

"Not me,"
says Jamie.

Rules are important for your child, especially rules like "never accept anything from a stranger."



A bird lands outside
on the fire escape.

“Look how pretty
it is!” says Jamie.

“Let’s go see it!”
says Jess.

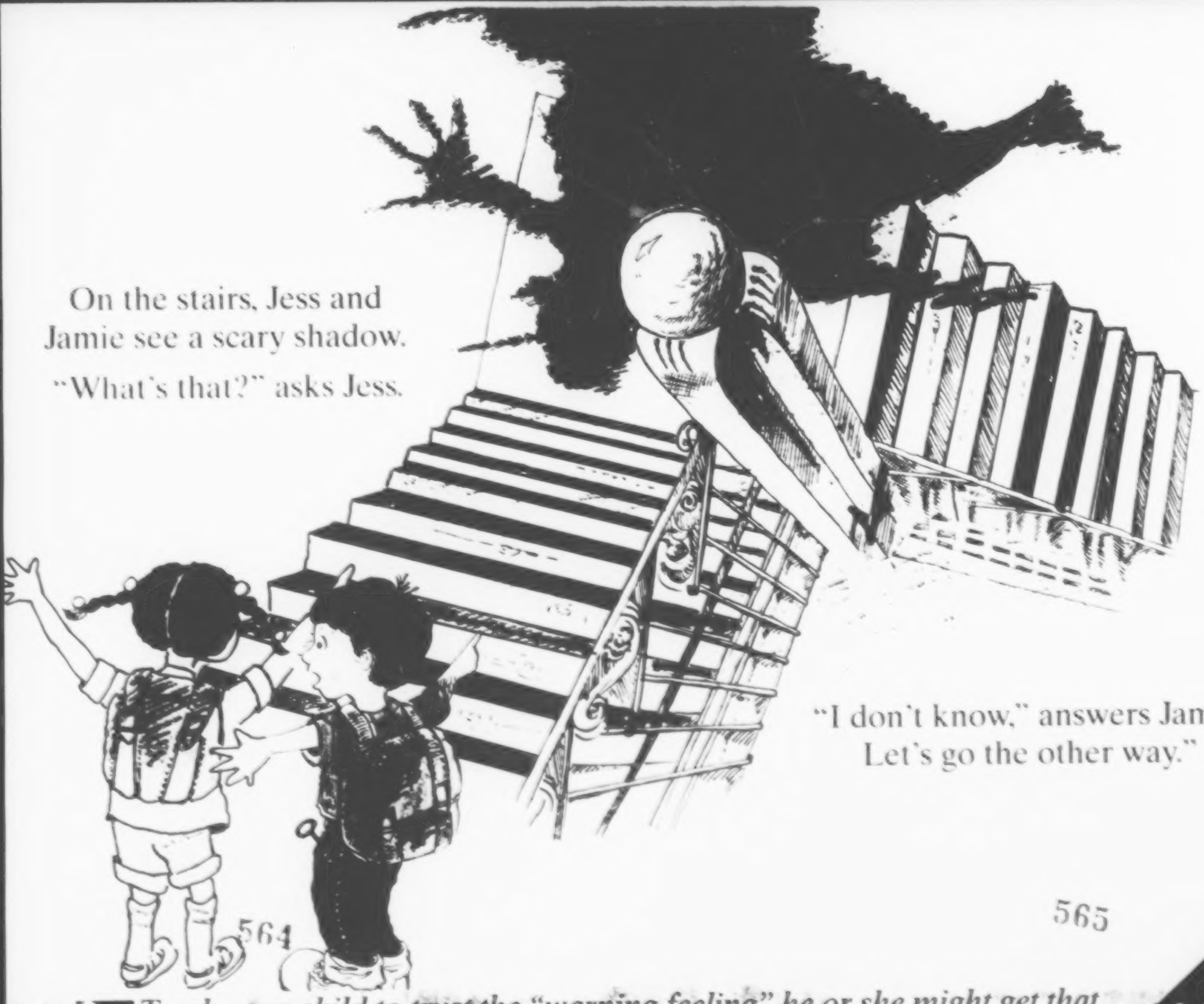
“I don’t think so,”
Jamie answers.

“My Dad said I
should only go out
on the fire escape
when there is a fire.”

There is a right time for doing some things, and there are some things children should never do. Help your child learn the difference.

On the stairs, Jess and Jamie see a scary shadow.

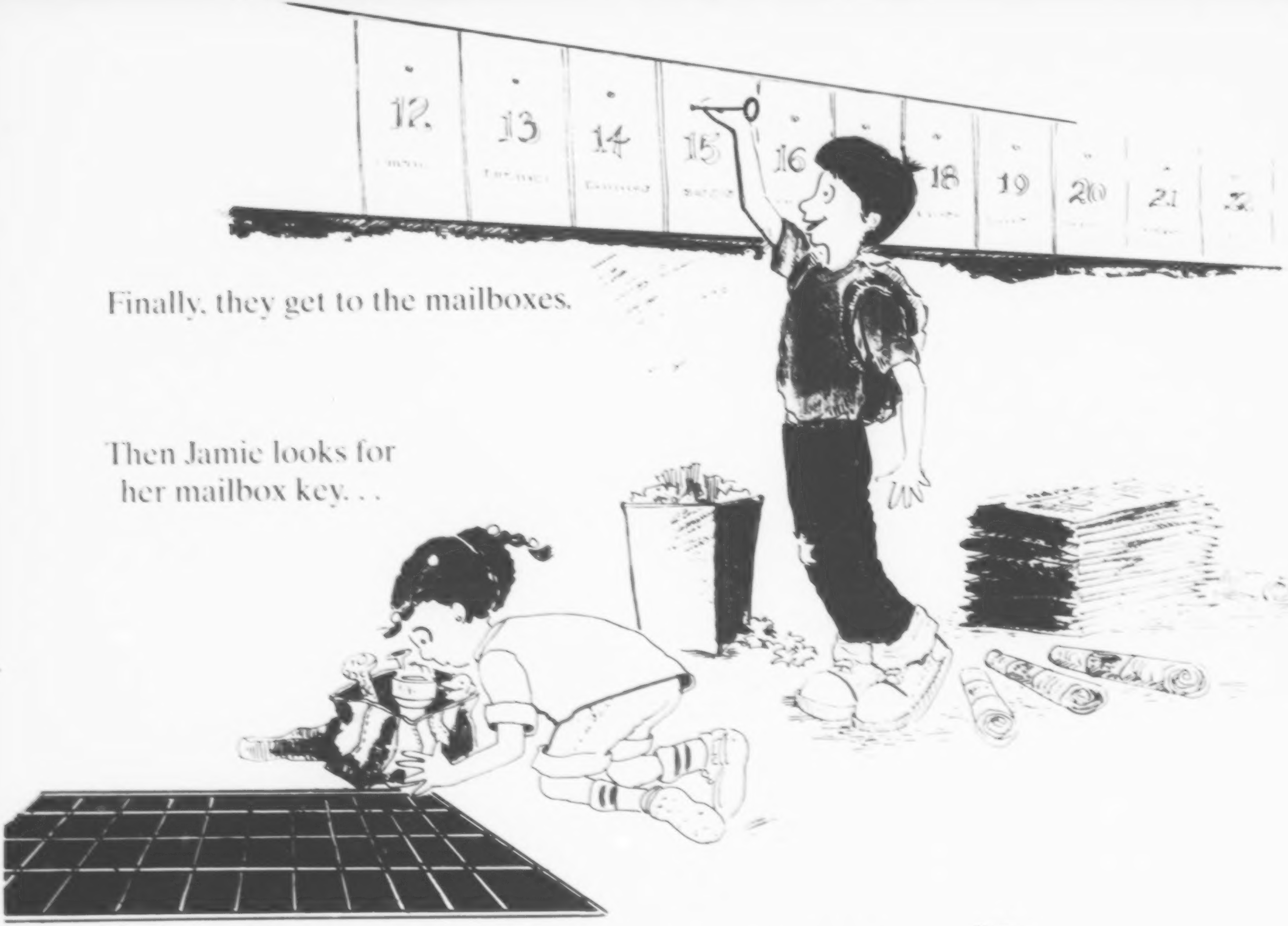
"What's that?" asks Jess.



"I don't know," answers Jamie. Let's go the other way."

Teach your child to trust the "warning feeling" he or she might get that says something is wrong. Because drug use is wrong, this skill can come in handy when your child is older.

UH-OH!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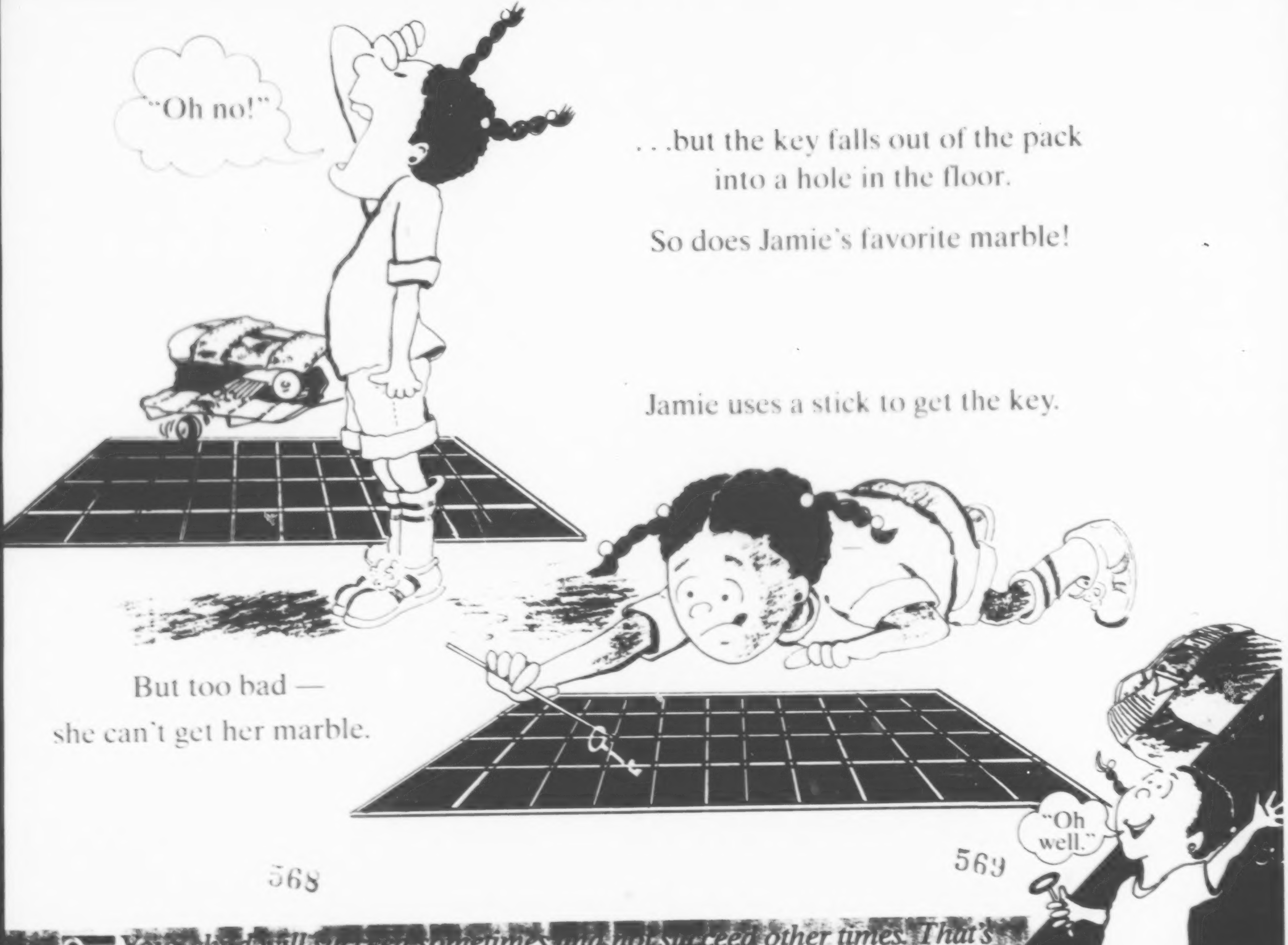
Finally, they get to the mailboxes.

Then Jamie looks for
her mailbox key. . .


"Oh no!"
"Oh well."

. . .but the key falls out of the pack
into a hole in the floor.

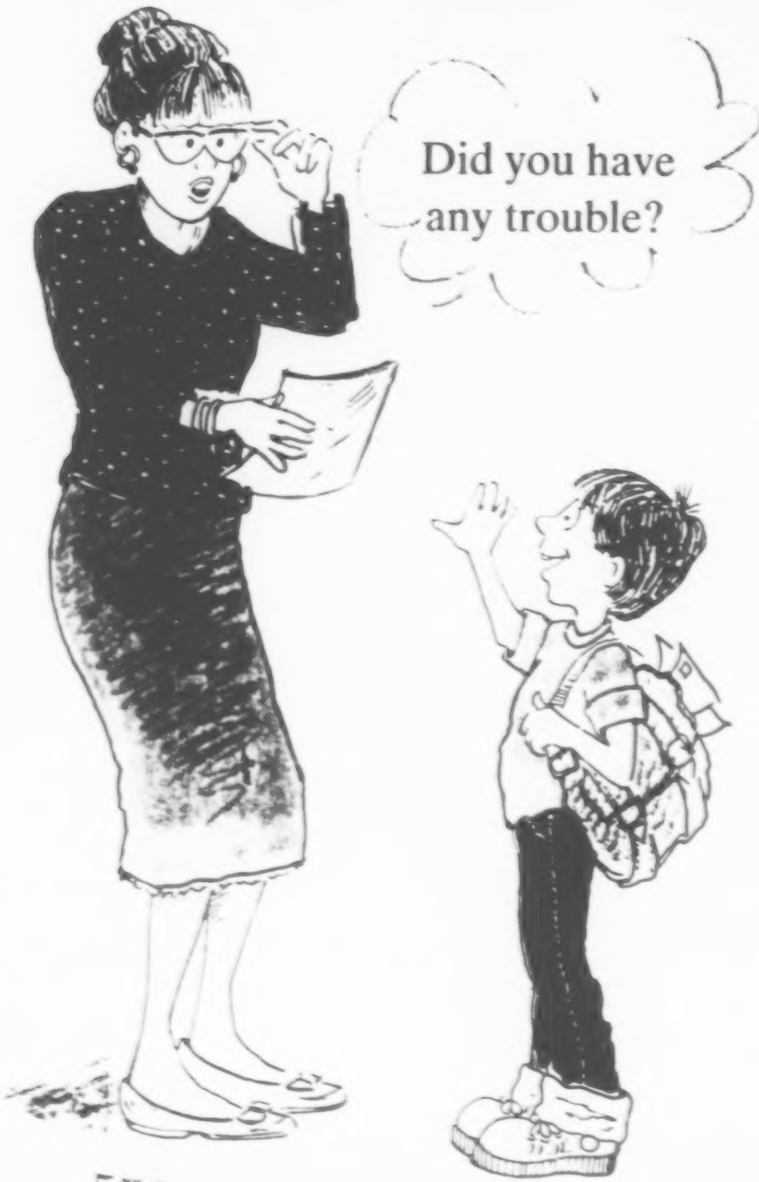
So does Jamie's favorite marble!

Jamie uses a stick to get the key.

But too bad —
she can't get her marble.

Your child will succeed sometimes and not succeed other times. That's

Jess and Jamie both finish their jobs,
and come back home.
Grandma and Dad are happy to see them.


Did you have any trouble?

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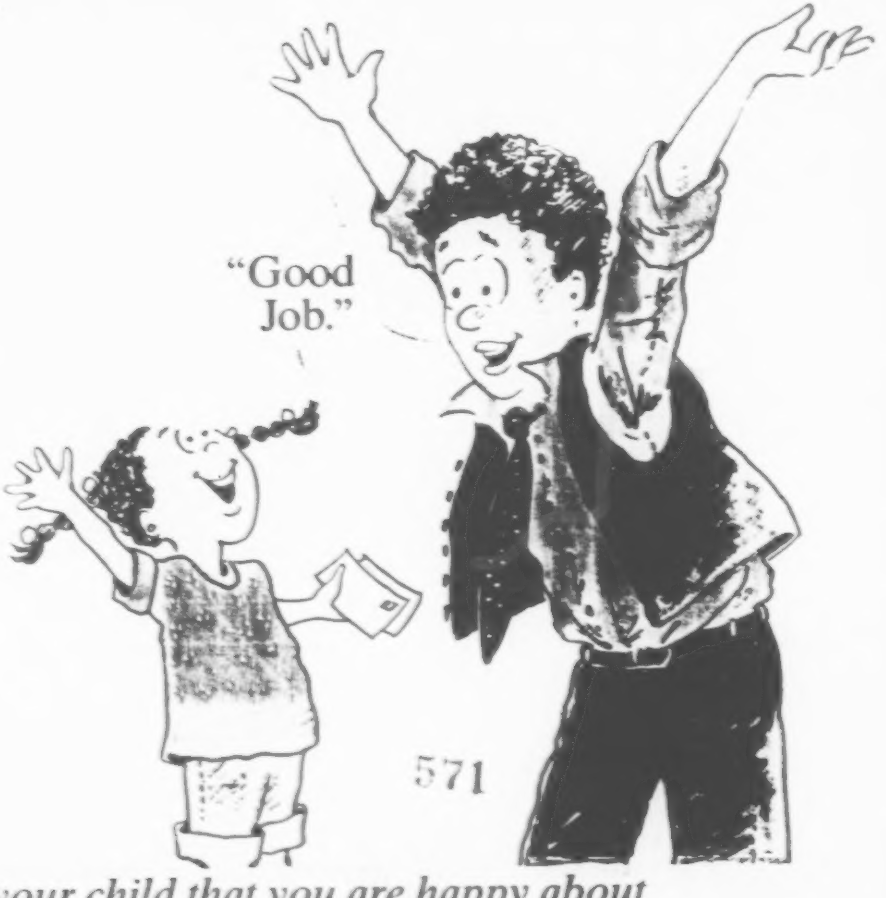

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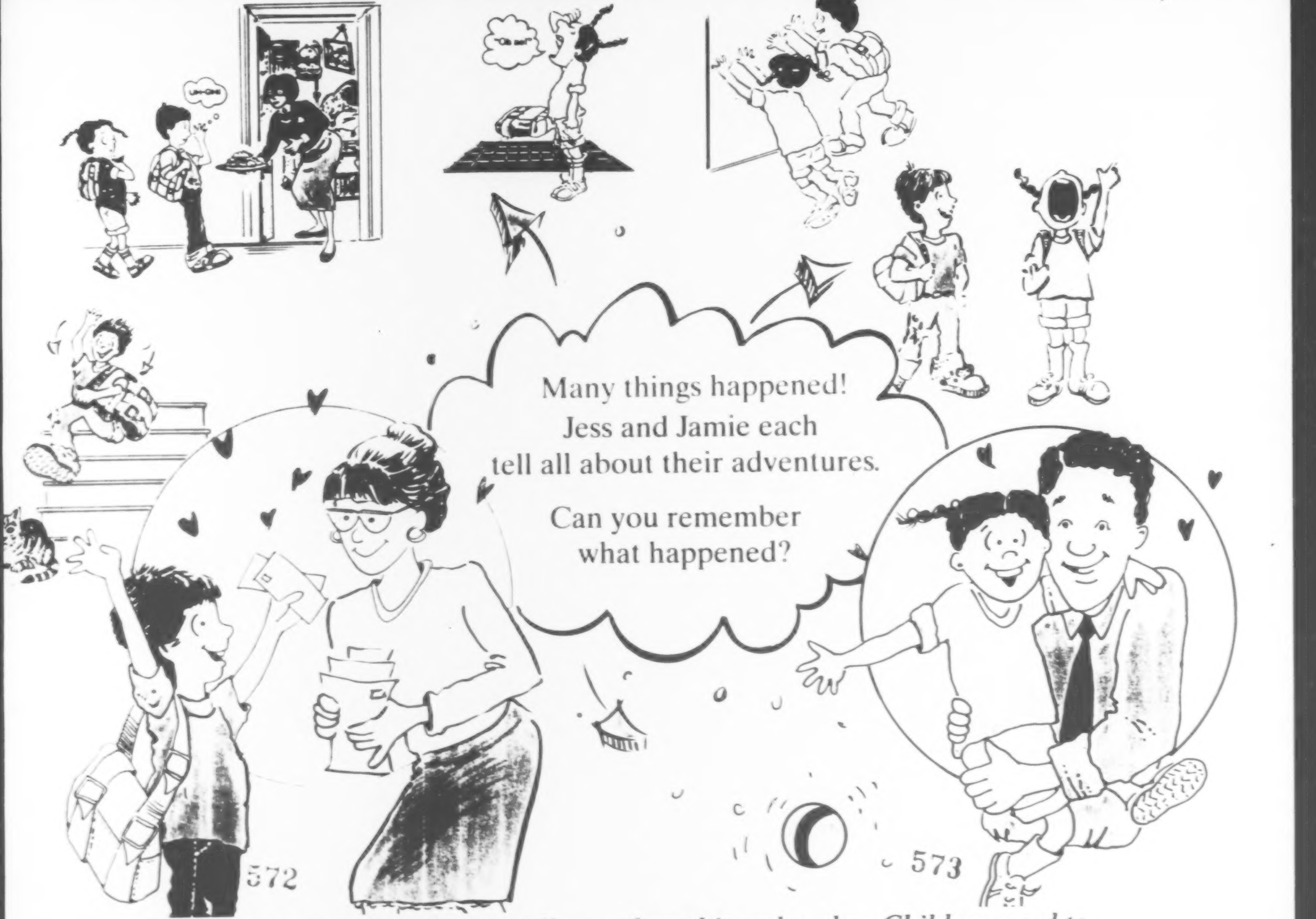
In your own way, show and tell your child that you are happy about something he or she did or said.



Many things happened!
Jess and Jamie each
tell all about their adventures.

Can you remember
what happened?

Encourage your child to tell you about his or her day. Children need to

The End

Jess and Jamie Get the Mail: The Ready, Set, Go Adventure Book is one of three publications in a package designed to help children develop healthy ideas and habits. Parents are invited to read *Ready!*, a magazine with more ideas on keeping children healthy, and home visitor professionals are invited to use *The Ready, Set, Go Home Visitor's Guide* with families working toward healthy lives.

The writing and design team for this children's book included the following staff members at RMC Research Corporation, Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and By Design, Stratham, New Hampshire:

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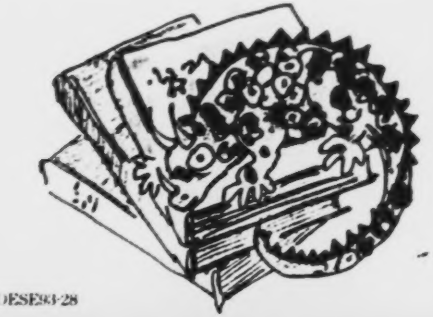

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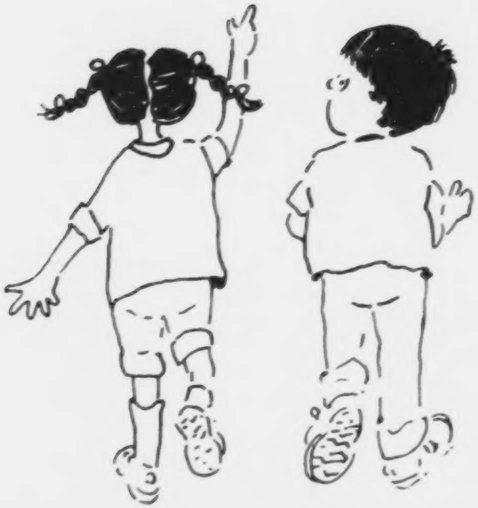

THE READY, SET, GO!

Home Visitor's Guide

A guide for
home visitors
with drug
education
messages
about health
and safety
for preschool
children and
their families

A companion
publication to
the **Ready!**
Parent's
Magazine
and the
Ready,
Set, Go!
Children's
Adventure
Book

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A guide for
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INTRODUCTION

> *"Home visitors are one of the most promising vehicles we have to make a positive impact on parents' and children's lives." — Edward Zigler, child development expert*

Welcome to the **Ready, Set, Go! Home Visitor's Guide**. This book will help you reinforce important concepts about health and safety when you visit homes with preschool children. The messages in this book come from collected knowledge about child development, parent involvement in education, parent/child interactions, and drug and alcohol prevention education. They are intended to lay the groundwork for equipping young children with the attitudes and skills they can practice now to become healthy decision makers when they grow older.

Preschoolers do not use drugs and have little understanding of what drugs are and why they can be harmful. However, by promoting the messages described in this guide — messages which focus on fostering healthy lifestyles, supportive communities, and warm, consistent parenting — children can be buffered from later drug use and alcohol abuse. This guide encourages the building, in young children, of a foundation of trust and a sense of limits and rules through the positive interactions of parents and children. The guide is not laden with facts and figures about drug use and alcohol abuse, and does not suggest polite preaching to young children not to use drugs when they are older, which is inappropriate for a preschooler. Parents are children's first and best teachers, and home visitors can support those growing relationships by suggesting new ideas to think about and creating environments where parents can consider those ideas.

As you will see, two main assumptions have guided the writing of this book (and its two companion publications, the **Ready, Set, Go! Parent's Magazine** and **Children's Adventure Book**):

> Parents want what is best for their children. As a home visitor, you can work with parents to develop healthy attitudes and behaviors in children. *Parents and children working together have enormous learning and growing power.*

Underlying all of these ideas is the fact that illegal drugs are illegal for people at all ages, and alcohol is illegal for people under 21 years old. If parents drink, they must avoid involving children in their alcohol use. Your reminders to parents can help reinforce this idea.

- The typical job of the home visitor, when working with these materials, is to raise issues for parents to think and talk about, not to intervene directly. But if your job as home visitor already includes direct counseling or intervention, these materials will provide additional support.

The intent of these publications is to reduce the risk that preschool children will become involved with drug use and alcohol abuse later in life. All children are at risk, and the risk increases with these factors:

- one or more of the child's parents and/or an older sibling uses drugs or abuses alcohol
- the child has social problems (a child's lack of friends, or aggressive behavior)
- the child lacks a close relationship with a caring adult
- the child has low confidence in his or her personal abilities (knowing how to make good decisions)

The chance that a child will use drugs when older increases as the number of risk factors increases. Not all children at risk end up using drugs. Home visitors, by supporting parents, are in a position to help create major changes that can buffer even the most endangered children from later drug use. By developing partnerships and genuine, nurturing relationships with families, skilled home visitors can convey a great deal of information and support.

Lilian Katz, president of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, has outlined basic principles for working with young children in learning situations. The following selected principles have provided a foundation of understanding for this guide and its messages; we encourage home visitors to refer to them often when working with families:

The younger the children, the larger the role of adults in helping them achieve social confidence. Children who have not achieved a reasonable degree of social confidence and skill by age six are at risk for a range of negative outcomes, including drug use or alcohol abuse.

The younger the children, the more they learn by interacting with people who are important in their lives, and through doing rather than being told. This assumption has informed the guide's approach of highlighting positive interactions with children, rather than telling children what to do.

The younger the children, the more important it is to focus on their own immediate environments — things they can see and feel and that are occurring now as part of daily routines, not in the future or the past.

This guide is not meant to supplement activities and discussions the home visitor already provides for prevention education, not replace an existing curriculum. Even if drug use prevention is not the primary focus of your program, these materials are relevant. With more than six million children under the age of 18 living with parents who use drugs or abuse alcohol, home visitors should find these messages relevant to many whom they serve, and complementary to many existing drug intervention programs.

GETTING YOURSELF READY

Here are some ideas about getting ready to use this guide.

We recognize that there is no one type of home visitor using this guide. The goals and methods used by various home visiting programs vary considerably, and so do the backgrounds of individuals. All home visitors, however, will encounter families whose lives have been touched by drug use or alcohol abuse. You don't need to be a substance abuse counselor to use this guide, but it's important to know where to turn if families are seeking help with a drug or alcohol problem or its repercussions in the family.

If your sponsoring agency doesn't provide training about drug use and alcohol abuse, ask for it. Many programs focus on a single dimension of family life (unemployment, nutrition, child abuse) and drug use/alcohol abuse may be seen as another agency's responsibility, even if it is a major problem. Training opportunities through hospitals, mental health centers, area councils on alcoholism, and state and local agencies should be available to you.

Get to know the community. Parents who become part of a social network where drugs are not used and alcohol is not abused can buffer their children from drug use. Home visitors can play a vital role in connecting parents with one another, forming play groups, and educating parents about available community resources. Referring parents to another agency isn't enough; plan to spend time developing relationships with members of the community, both to model the skill to parents, and to help parents begin to build their own sense of a true community.

Read, and get to know, the Ready, Set, Go! Parents' Magazine and Children's Adventure Book. These publications provide direct connections to the messages in this guide, interpreted and articulated for the parent and child readers. (See page 9 for a cross-reference with the magazine and children's book.)

Ask for help if you need it. One of the messages underlying both the Parent's Magazine and Children's Adventure Book is "ask for help." That message applies to home visitors, too. Because your work requires much more than sharing information, and you will become closely involved with families, you may need someone to talk with about the problems and feelings related to your job. In order to keep things in perspective, get the support you need to do your job well.

Know where to call. A home visitor can't do it all. Make yourself a reference guide below of other professionals with whom you can consult and collaborate to design the most effective outreach and service to families. We have suggested some types of organizations or individuals you might want to have on your network list. You might want to tailor a list for each family.

Organization/type	Contact person	Phone
Drug use intervention or counseling for adults		
Family literacy program		
Adult education program		
Early childhood education program		
Child care program		
Nutrition counseling or assistance		
Parenting skills program		
Child abuse or spouse abuse assistance program		
Local parent groups or play groups		
Local library		

HOW TO USE THIS HANDBOOK

All three of the **Ready!** publications — the children's book, parent's magazine, and this guide — cover the same basic messages. The messages have been introduced in different ways for each audience. As a home visitor, you can reinforce the messages that parents will read throughout the magazine — the same messages parents and children will see and talk about when reading the children's book.

The home visitor guide is designed to help you reinforce the messages by giving you the following information for **each** message:

A statement of the message

The main ideas to **Keep in Mind** that make the message important for families. It will help you to read these ideas before you begin. You might want to come back to them from time to time for reminders about key points.

- A brief discussion of the **Reasons Behind the Message**. Each discussion will give you a little bit of research background along with some guidance about why the message is important — why the message can have an effect on young children and help parents lay the foundation for drug prevention.
- **A Starting Point**. The home visitor guide provides one major activity or discussion that will start the home visitor in the process of delivering the message. Some of the activities are for home visitors and parents together; some are for the whole family.

Some home visitor questions and answers about using this guide

Do I have to use the messages in the order given in the guide?

No. All of the messages are important, but it doesn't matter in what order you cover them. In fact, it's probably best to tailor a sequence for each family depending on the family's immediate interests and needs.

As you can see, the 12 messages have been clustered under four larger categories. You might find it helpful to concentrate on one of these larger categories at a time to make sure the main ideas are coming across strongly and parents and children see how the ideas relate. For example, the category **Helping Children Feel Safe and Secure** has three messages: How Parents Protect Their Children, Building Children's Confidence, and Children's Good Qualities. To help parents focus on the idea of safety and security, you might choose to spend a few weeks on these three messages before going on to another category.

*If you need help in selecting which messages to address first, keep this in mind: message clusters 1 and 2 (**Helping Children Feel Safe and Secure** and **Helping Children Understand Rules and Limits**) must be developed in children at an early age, or it becomes very difficult to develop them when older. While all four message groups are important to preschoolers, you may want to start with these two.*

Do I have to cover all of the messages?

No. We know you have limited time with families and a lot of responsibilities. Use your own judgement about which messages are most valuable for each family and make your own choices. The 12 messages relate strongly to each other, and families will get the most impact if they are all introduced in one way or another, but **any** combination of the messages will be beneficial.

Some of the messages sound the same. Is there really a difference?

Some of the messages do seem to overlap, but there are important differences that make each one valuable. For example, **Making Rules** and **Setting Limits** may sound like the same thing. But as you read the reasons behind each message, you'll see that each one covers a slightly different idea, each of which is important to children's development.

Do I need to cover all of the messages within a certain time period?

No. All of the 12 messages underlie good parenting skills and healthy child development. They will have value for preschool children at any time.

Do the activities need to be done exactly as presented?

No. Again, you are the best judge of what your client families want and need. Feel free to adapt the activities to make them relevant and fun. Each parent is different, each child is different...we hope you will take the opportunity to make the ideas in this guide work for your clients in ways that make sense to you.

Cross-Reference of the **Ready!** Series

The three publications in the **Ready!** series (this Home Visitor's Guide, the Parent's Magazine, and the Children's Book) are designed to be used together. They all cover the same topics, each in a different way for different readers. Use the chart below to make connections that help home visitor, parent, and child work together on the same ideas.

Topic	Home Visitor's Guide Page numbers	Parent's Magazine Page numbers	Children's Book Page numbers
Protecting children	11	4	1,2,4,7,13
Building children's confidence	16	6	3,7,11-12,13
Children's good qualities	20	8	5,10
Children making choices	26	22	10
Setting limits	30	26	1,2
Making rules	35	24	8
Appropriate behaviors	38	28	9
Sharing activities	44	12,14,20	14
Telling stories	49	16	6
Mediating messages	52	18	8
Parent attitudes	61	30	13,14

MESSAGE GROUP ONE

Helping Children Feel

- How parents protect their children
- Building children's confidence
- Children's good qualities

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How parents protect their children

KEEP IN MIND

- Parents affect how safe children feel in the world in subtle but powerful ways.
- Safety issues are both physical and emotional.
- Children's safety and security needs change with age.
- While general guidelines can be developed for keeping children safe, individual children have differing needs.
- It's never too early to work on building secure attachments between parent and child.
- Children who feel secure are more likely to accept adult values.

REASONS BEHIND THE MESSAGE

How parents protect their children

Children develop a sense of how safe, secure, and responsive their world is in the first few years of life. Erik Erikson, one of the leading thinkers about emotional development throughout the lifespan, calls this early need "basic trust." He suggests that every child's future development relies on a dependable concept of the world, especially about his or her parents and environment. More recently, experts have called this attachment, a term used to describe the quality of parent-child relationships. The quality of children's attachment develops through interaction with the person the child spends the most time with (usually, but not necessarily, the mother) on a daily, repeated basis. Attachment is based on interactions that are warm, responsive, sensitive, and predictable.

Children considered to be "securely attached" as babies have the better chance of being well adjusted as preschoolers. Adults and children think of them as social leaders, eager to learn, and empathetic toward others in distress. Insecurely attached children, on the other hand, have shown less complex play, and more frustration and temper tantrums. They are less willing to stick with a difficult problem or ask for help; they avoid adults and other children. These family, school, and peer experiences have implications for later alcohol and other drug use.

Home visitors working with parents of young children can help parents create safe and secure environments. Some ways are very concrete and direct (such as childproofing the home). Others are more subtle and require more careful attention (for example, helping parents form stable attachments with their children by encouraging them to be more sensitive, accepting, cooperative, and accessible). Because children's safety and security needs change with age, home visitors can be helpful in working with parents to adjust physical and emotional restrictions for children as they grow.

STARTING POINT

Getting parents to think concretely about how they protect their children reminds them that protection happens in many ways, and some of them are hard to notice. Here's an activity for all members in the family that:

How parents protect their children

- has practical use;
- gives family members a common technique for protecting one another
- is easy to remember; and
- gives parents a sense of satisfaction that they are actively protecting their children.

Ask the family members to think of a special word that everyone can remember, and that isn't used ordinarily in every day life. The word could have special meaning to the family. This word will become the family's "code word" to use when there is danger present or the family needs to come together for some reason.

For example, suppose a family chooses SUNFLOWER as its code word. All members of the family agree that when any family member calls out SUNFLOWER, everyone else stops and comes together around the person who called out the word. Whether people are down the street, in the back yard, or upstairs playing, they all recognize that someone is in trouble or needs to have everyone together and that is more important than what they are doing right now. It could happen one-on-one, such as when a parent sees a child going up to a strange car, or starting to pick up a piece of broken glass. Or, it could be when everyone needs to come together, such as a threatening thunderstorm, a lost child, or danger in the street. The code word is a signal that the family needs to be together...right now!

Provide opportunities for the family to practice using the code word. For example, if you're walking with parents down to the park and the children have run too far ahead, suggest to the mother that she try the code word. Remind everyone in the family that the code word shouldn't be used to play a joke or to fool people; if that happens, the significance of the code word will be lost.

Code words really work because the unique sound cuts through all of the other noise going on so that family members can pick it up easily as they're playing or working or doing other things. Code words are also something family members can share — like a family secret that is special to each person.

Over time, as you make visits to the home, ask how the code word has been used and remind parents and children that the code word is always available as a way to protect and help one another.

Note: Some home visitors feel that this activity works best when the home visitor has a good sense of the family's communication style or if the family already communicates well together. Others believe it's a good exercise to help a family begin to communicate better. Use your experience to decide if the activity is right for each family you serve.

Building children's confidence

KEEP IN MIND

- Children who feel confident in themselves and have a healthy self concept are less likely to use drugs and abuse alcohol and other drugs as they grow older.
- The way parents interact with their children everyday affects the children's self-concept for better or worse.
- In selecting with whom and where children spend time, parents are influencing the messages their children are getting about themselves.

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REASONS BEHIND THE MESSAGE

The idea of self-esteem underlies most prevention curricula for young children, whether it's for preventing drug use and alcohol abuse, school failure, or social problems. Many studies have shown that when children aren't plagued by self-doubt and fear, they are more likely to lead productive, healthy lives.

Building children's confidence

Self-esteem isn't something grownups can give children by doing a few simple exercises in a book. Self-esteem grows over time as children spend time with adults and other children whom they trust — people who accept and value them. The seeds for self-esteem are planted in infancy and develop throughout life. The preschool years are especially important; this is when children develop a sense of self and the confidence to explore their worlds.

Stanley Coopersmith has studied families where children develop high self-esteem. While his work has been with school-aged children, the findings have relevance for parents of preschoolers. He found that parents of children with a healthy self concept, compared to parents of children with a low or unhealthy self concept:

- showed more love and acceptance in everyday expressions of affection;
- were less critical;
- set and enforced clear rules and expectation and were less permissive;
- listened to their children and took their opinions into account when there were disagreements.

Home visitors can play an important role in helping parents appreciate these strategies. Other ideas for parents who want to promote children's self-esteem include:

not making comparisons between children;

treating sons and daughters equally;

encouraging healthy friendships;

helping children develop their interests and abilities (which may differ from the interests and abilities their parents want them to have).

STARTING POINT

Children feel good about themselves when others (especially their parents) feel good about them. You can create situations as a home visitor in which parents are reminded about supporting the growth of each child's self-image.

Building children's confidence

Read a children's book as a threesome. Talk together about the points where the characters feel good about themselves and why. A good book for this activity is the children's book that accompanies this guide. There are a number of instances where the child characters are proud of their abilities or pleased that others are thinking about them. The book includes examples of parents supporting children's confidence in different ways.

Another way to build "self-confidence" into the daily routine of parent and child is to suggest a short bedtime ritual. Each night, as the child is being tucked in, the parent tells one thing the child did that day that the parent especially liked— that made the parent proud or happy. The child also tells something about the parent that he or she liked.

Also, encourage parents of older preschoolers to listen carefully to how their children play, especially play with puppets, dolls, and make-believe. There will be lots of clues about the child's self-image and the messages the child hears from parents and others. Parents can use such opportunities as reminders to "check in" on the child's confidence. Promoting self-confidence is a continuous business — it's about how children feel in their daily interactions with their parents and with others. Clues to confidence levels can be found in how a child deals with stress or disappointment, behaves with other children, practices skills and gets better at doing things (like getting dressed or drawing), responds to a parent's guidance, or gives signals about what he or she needs from a parent.

The articles on pages 6 and 8 of the Parent magazine will give you and parents some ideas on raising children's confidence levels.

Appreciating children's good qualities

KEEP IN MIND

- All children have good qualities but the qualities may sometimes be hard for parents to see.
- A child's temperament is relatively stable from infancy on.
- While temperament cannot be changed, it can be modified. Home visitors can help parents adapt parenting approaches to the individual needs of children.
- When parents' and children's temperaments conflict, it may be harder for parents to appreciate the good qualities children bring to the relationship.

REASONS BEHIND THE MESSAGE

Appreciating children's good qualities

As any parent knows, every child is different, and the differences are clear from birth. Some children sleep and eat at regular times, are generally in good moods, and approach new situations with enthusiasm. Others seem to have no internal rhythm, are difficult to soothe, respond intensely to new situations or sudden events, and are rarely happy. Still other children, while responding to new situations timidly and adapting slowly to changes in what is familiar, adapt with time. These different patterns of being a person are called temperament and have been found to be quite stable from the early months of infancy onward.

Scientists have observed babies from two months to school age and developed three general categories: easy babies, difficult babies, and slow-to-warm-up babies. While two babies described as "difficult" can develop into very different preschoolers based on how parents treat them, their basic temperaments seem to change very little. An impulsive child can learn to wait her turn, even though her first reaction might still be to charge ahead. A timid child can learn to play eagerly with others, even though his first impulse when in a new situation may still be to cling to his mother. How parents come to understand their children's temperament, then work with it, makes a big difference in how well children adjust to the demands of childhood and how they feel about themselves.

Temperament is not readily changed though aspects of the child's behavior can be modified. A shy child will never become completely outgoing, no matter how much a parent rewards, punishes, encourages, or coaches. However, neither should parents give up and say "that's just the way she is." Slow-to-warm-up children can adjust beautifully to the demands of nursery school or family gatherings if the parents and teachers accept their shyness without pushing them, encourage them, and allow them to join in at their own pace.

Not all behavior is related to temperament or part of the child's permanent personality. Almost every American baby goes through a period when she cries if her mother leaves the room, but this doesn't mean they all have timid personalities. Toddlers are known for being difficult, but for most children, the difficulty gives way to cooperation as children gain language and learn to control their impulses. It is important to separate behaviors that are part of the child's developmental phase from the ones that reflect the child's basic personality. One way to help parents appreciate this distinction is to observe many different same-aged children and watch for similarities and differences in the ways children interact with each other and with new situations.

When the child's temperament conflicts with what the parent wants and expects, problems can develop. When a sociable parent tries to push his clinging, fearful child into social situations or new experiences wanting him to be "just like the other kids," or when a strong-willed and intense parent faces off with an equally determined child time after time, feelings of anger, disappointment, failure, and frustration are common. Many good qualities in a child can be overlooked by a parent who values other qualities.

Learning to modify temperament, since it can't be completely changed, is the key to making the necessary adjustments and transitions in life. Not all approaches to raising children, discipline, and social activity will work equally well with all children. Home visitors can help parents match child raising approaches to the needs of individual children and also help parents identify their child's temperament and come to appreciate the strengths the child brings to the world.

One early, but still useful, resource for home visitors to read and share with parents is the book, **Your Child is a Person** by Stella Chess, Alexander Thomas, and Herbert Birch.

STARTING POINT

Appreciating children's good qualities

Rarely do we know objectively how each of us really responds to new situations. What we think about how **others** act is probably based on our own instincts and feelings about the same situation. This is certainly true for parents' expectations of their own children. As a home visitor, you can take advantage of daily events to help a parent understand that...

...a child's actions in a new situation give clues to his temperament.

Does he act quickly?
Does he hang back?
Does he talk easily to others?
Does he seek familiar activities or people?

Point out to the parent what you've seen.

...a child's temperament is probably both similar to and different from the parent's.

How might the parent have acted as a child in the same situation?
Do the parent and child seem to have different approaches?

Point out to the parent the positive similarities and interesting differences you've seen.

...parents can observe the qualities they have been trying to instill in their children.

Have they been encouraging quieter behavior?
Have they been promoting a more outgoing personality?
Do they want their child to be more careful in risky situations?
Do they encourage the child to stick with an activity?

Discuss which qualities are most important to the parent in the long term.

...parents can observe the times when the child is at "her best."

Describe some of those situations.
Who is there?
What is the type of activity?

Point out what helps the child to feel sure of himself or herself.

C04

Use informal opportunities where there are other children the same age to watch a child with the parent — a playground visit, a visit with friends, babysitting for relatives. You might start a conversation with the parent related to the points above by asking the parent: What really pleases her when she is watching her child play with others? What are her child's best qualities? Which ones has she worked really hard to develop? And which ones seem to come naturally?

For fun, ask the parent if he or she ever thinks about what the child might be like, or might become, when he or she grows up. What qualities stand out in the child now that could be helpful to meet those hopes? Are they qualities the parent likes in the child ... or would like to change? Does the parent have any of the same qualities?

Another fun activity (especially for a parent working on literacy skills) is for the home visitor and parent to develop together two lists of descriptive words: one list describing the parent and one describing the child. Compare the lists. Which words appear on both lists? The home visitor might want to add words to the lists with positive observations.

These discussions are ones that you would probably want to have with a parent over time, as your relationship with the parent becomes comfortable and friendly. The important purpose is to have parents step back and take notice of a child's special qualities — and not feel pressured to have children act in a certain way. Discussions like these lay the groundwork for parents being able to successfully shape children's actions.

Helping Children Understand

- Children making choices/parents making choices
- Setting limits
- Making rules
- Appropriate behaviors: when and where

Special note: The following section talks about how children gradually form their own abilities to make smart decisions for themselves when they are older. Parents can provide their children with a whole range of experiences that give children practice with decision making. Those experiences can range from understanding rules to knowing when a certain behavior is appropriate or inappropriate.

All of these experiences — following rules, recognizing limits, knowing when and where behaviors are appropriate, and making safe choices — are critical to the development of a healthy lifestyle in which a child operates and behaves. Children make some choices, but also learn to respect the boundaries which keep them safe and protect other people. People only become good decision makers as adults when they spend their early years practicing how to make choices and decisions within the bounds of parents' care and protection.

We encourage home visitors to spend time reading through this section to become familiar with the ways in which rules, limits, appropriate behaviors, and choices are different, and how they reinforce one another.

Children and parents making choices

KEEP IN MIND

- Young children can make choices about preferences but adults should make the important choices.
- The choices children make later, about friends, school, drugs, and other things, will be influenced by whom they spend time with, what those people think and do, and the environment in which they live.
- Parents can help children make choices that the parents support if they provide opportunities for children to spend time with people the parents like and respect.

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REASONS BEHIND THE MESSAGE

Parents' responsibility for children's safety goes beyond the time the family spends together. Children's confidence in themselves depends on how they interact with other people who are important to them, too. Surely, parents are the most important people for helping children develop expectations about relationships. The people chosen by parents to stand-in for them when they are not around will also have profound impact on how children grow.

Children making choices, parents making choices

John and Beatrice Whiting have studied children all over the world for over 50 years looking for ways people are similar and different from early infancy onward. They believe we are shaped by the people we spend time with, their roles and activities, and by the settings in which we spend time. For example, children who spend time with kids their own age tend to be more competitive than children who spend time in mixed-aged groups. Children who help take care of younger children (especially babies) are more nurturing than children who do not.

With respect to drug and alcohol prevention, parents play a key role by selecting both the settings and people (or at least kinds of people) by whom their children will be socialized. For example, a parent who leaves a young child with a relative known to have a drug use/alcohol abuse problem because she is available may save money on childcare but endanger a child in two ways: potential physical risk, and exposure to attitudes toward substances that directly conflict with prevention. Children tend to accept the attitudes and feelings of people close to them; parents need to evaluate whether the people they chose to be with their children reflect the values they want their children to assume about drugs and alcohol.

Children who play unsupervised in dangerous neighborhoods or with children who receive little adult supervision or guidance learn different rules about what is right and wrong, how to be a friend, and what makes a healthy activity than children who spend time in supervised activity. Children who are at high risk for later drug use or alcohol abuse are less likely to develop alcohol and other drug related problems if they formed supportive, secure relationships with some key adult early in life.

This doesn't mean that only people who can afford good childcare can protect their children. Paying a lot of money is no guarantee that children will be protected and valued. What is important is that parents choose adults with whom they share basic values, people they trust and respect to care for their children when they are not present. It is much harder to choose older children's friends but parents can select settings where preschool children are more likely to meet children whose parents have values similar to their own (for example, play groups sponsored by a group to which the parents belong).

STARTING POINT

The delicate balance between letting children make choices to practice thinking and learning skills and parents' making choices for children's safety and long-term well-being requires constant, conscious awareness...and equal measures of compromise and determination.

Children making choices, parents making choices

Suggest that families keep a journal for one or two days, in which parents mark down the occasions where choices were made — and hundreds of choices are made every day in every family. Ask them to record how choices were made about: how children dressed, what the family had for meals, how children spent their time and with whom they spent it, what television programs were watched, what books were read, what time the children went to bed, what children got to eat for snacks, who took care of the children when the parents were out at work or doing chores, how the children helped around the house (picking up toys, helping to get themselves dressed, etc.).

Once the journal is complete, review it with parents and ask questions about who made the decision in each case and why. Which decisions were important for parents to make, and which ones were okay for the children to make? How did the children's decisions help them learn something new, or practice a skill, or mature in their thinking processes? Which decisions could the parents "give up" next week, and let the children make? Which decisions should the parents "take back" from children for the benefit of the children?

Remember that while there are basic guidelines that limit the decisions children should make, the specifics depend on parents' beliefs, the capabilities and skills of the children, and, to some extent, the standards of the immediate community. Encourage parents to think in these terms to make balanced decisions about how parents and children should be making choices.

Kid's Limit
2 MILES

Setting limits

KEEP IN MIND

- Parents of preschoolers must be active in guiding their children.
- When parents are warm but firm and reasonable, children are more competent.
- Children with authoritarian parents who exert their authority because of their power as parents are less likely to be independent, have good self-concept, and form solid friendships — factors that place them at higher risk for alcohol and other drug use as adolescents.
- Parents can help children internalize limits by being consistent and specific, teaching alternatives, and teaching logical consequences.

REASONS BEHIND THE MESSAGE

Setting limits

Parents set limits on children's behavior for many reasons: to keep them safe, keep others safe, help children learn the expectations of others and be liked by them, and make daily life easier. The younger the child, the less control he has over his own body, emotions, and impulses and the more adults must help and guide him. Gradually, with development and experience, children learn to stop and think by themselves before they act. Parents of preschoolers must be active in guiding their children.

It is important that parents be firm and reasonable, letting children know what they can and cannot do. Setting limits helps parents convey what they want children to do and not do; this is not the same as punishment, even though punishment is used to convey that a child has gone over the limit. When parents rely on punishment alone or require their children to obey just because the parent is the boss, without explaining, children may be obedient in the short-run but they are likely to lack empathy toward others, have low self-image and make moral decisions based on whether they'll get caught, rewarded, or punished rather than based on a real understanding of what is right or wrong.

When parents are warm, nurturing, firm, and reasonable, and expect that their limits for good behavior will be met, children develop confidence and are able to meet new challenges. Children also need their parents to listen to them and sometimes to provide explanations for rules.

Control is not necessarily a bad thing. When parents are permissive, accepting all of their children's behavior without judgement, making few demands for more mature behavior and not providing consequences for unacceptable behavior, children do not learn independence and social responsibility.

Some children are much more compliant than others. In some families, there seem to be few times when parents have to exert their power in order to get children to comply and in some families, parents are constantly focused on getting children to obey. Because warmth is such an important ingredient to effective parenting, it is important that parents not get locked into power struggles with their children. Time for fun and shared activities helps foster the trusting relationships necessary for children to want to comply with their parents and develop shared family values.

Home visitors can help parents learn to set limits. These guidelines are helpful for parents to keep in mind:

- Be consistent in responding when your child does not comply with the limit. That means every time you see it, you must respond.

- Be specific about what to do and what not to do. Give the limit and the reason behind it rather than falling back on, "Because I said so."

- Teach alternatives to behaviors you do not accept. Remember, it is very hard for young children to stop an action once they begin. Tell them what they can do with that energy...something acceptable to you. It is even better if the alternative is something you can enjoy together.

- Rather than punish children (which will only have a short-term benefit and many negative long-term ones), give them logical consequences for their behavior (such as "If you leave your toy on the stairs, I will put it away for the rest of the day.") Logical consequences link the child's behavior to what happens; threatening to spank the child if she leaves her toy on the stairs or offering to give her a treat if she doesn't does not provide such a link.

STARTING POINT

Setting limits

Getting children to understand the idea of limits is difficult if the parent works on this concept when he or she is angry, tired, or exasperated. Ideally, it's best that children have a general sense that there are limitations on their actions without having to make up numerous rules; the rules should come when the idea of "limits" is too complex or unclear to the child in a given situation, or when a situation is too dangerous to allow a child to act on his or her sense of limitations.

The home visitor can help the parent preview limits that are needed and also practice designing appropriate consequences for exceeding the limits or breaking a rule to control the child's behavior. Try these discussions with a parent who is upset with her ability to control her child's misbehavior.

Begin by making a list together of the child's behaviors that the parent is trying to change or control (like grabbing the cat, taking clothes out of drawers, playing with food). Write down reasons the parent usually gives for each limit (such as "it hurts the cat," "the clothes will get dirty"). Brainstorm additional reasons that might more clearly be used to explain limits to a preschooler.

Next, think about one or two logical consequences for each limit that the parent might tell the child. Examples: "If you hit the cat, he might scratch you," or "If you get the clothes dirty, we won't be able to dress up to go visiting."

Try to get the parent to come up with his or her own words or way of saying the behavior that bothers him, the reason it bothers, and the action he can take to prevent the behavior.

If a parent can't get the limit across, the child may not be ready to recognize and act within the limit. For example, the child may not be ready for a pet if she can't limit her own behaviors which would injure the pet. Advise parents in those cases to try again later when the child is older.

If the parent is working on literacy skills, this could become a writing practice activity. Make a chart for the parent to fill in as you talk.

Behavior that bothers	Reasons it bothers	Actions parents can take to prevent behavior

An example for filling out the chart above:

Behavior: Banging on pots and pans with a spoon

Reasons: People won't be able to hear each other

Action: Others may get angry and ask you to go to another room. Let the child know that he can only bang on the pots and pans when Mom or Dad says it's OK.

This discussion activity encourages the parent to preview children's actions and know ahead of time how to react. Practice of this type goes a long way toward taking the tensions out of daily interactions.

MESSAGE GROUP TWO

Making rules

KEEP IN MIND

- Children understand the importance and value of rules very differently at different ages.
- Even young children appreciate the difference between rules designed to keep people safe and rules designed for convenience.
- Parents can help children develop their moral reasoning by including them in rule making, letting them make certain kinds of safe mistakes, resolving some of their own conflicts (such as an argument with another preschooler over a toy), and discussing the reasons for their behavior with them.

REASONS BEHIND THE MESSAGE

Parents develop rules for children to keep them safe, protect others and their belongings, help them be accepted by the community, and sometimes for convenience in day-to-day living. Why is it that young children "ignore" or "forget" rules and seem more eager to do what they want rather than what adults want?

Making rules

William Damon has studied the way children think about social issues for many years. He saw that preschool children cannot differentiate their own perspective on rules from the adult perspective. He has outlined the levels of understanding children go through in developing an understanding of rules. During the preschool years:

> Children think that adults want what children want. Adults are seen as extensions of the child. For example, a child may give his mother a toy truck for her birthday believing that she wants that more than anything else.
>
> Children still see authority and rules from their own perspective but also see them as obstacles interfering with their desires. A child, when told to pick up her toys, may push the toys to the corner instead of picking them up.

There are differences in how even young children understand rules. Preschoolers make the distinction between rules that protect people from harm and those that are for convenience. When asked if it would be okay to hit others if there were no rule, most children say "no," but when asked if it would be okay not to hang up your coat if there were no rule, most children say "yes."

Adults' goals related to rules must go beyond teaching children to obey and respect rules. Parents can help children think about social issues by letting them participate as far as possible in the process of establishing rules. They can:

> encourage children to take responsibility for their actions and help other family members do so, too;
>
> allow children the freedom to make safe mistakes (where injury or harm won't occur) and learn for themselves why it is important to follow certain rules;
>
> support children in resolving conflicts among themselves.

STARTING POINT

Making rules

Home visitors can create opportunities in which a parent can see her child in a different light. Ideally in these situations, the parent learns something new about how the child thinks. To help a parent discover how her child understands rules and their purposes, suggest that she encourage the child once in a while to make up a rule that the family needs or that his playmates need.

Children as young as three will be able to make up rules about toy sharing, playing with new items, having snacks, and watching TV. This is a good activity to do **with** the parent and child. You will be able to ask questions with the parent to understand how the child is thinking. Why does he think the rule is necessary? What should happen if the rule is broken? To whom does the rule apply? Is the rule always true? Does he want the parent to enforce the rule?

The child's answers will give you clues about his understanding of rules. Share your observations with the parent. Share stories from the experience of other people to show how preschoolers think about fairness and what's right. Often a story about children's thinking will stick with a parent and may help her reflect about something in her own child that seems puzzling. The more the home visitor can get the parent interested in how the child thinks, the more confident the parent will be in making rules and setting limits.

Here's an interesting real example of how a child's idea of fairness might be surprising. A day care director was practicing sharing skills with two of her children in a rural day care center. There were two children, and two toy cars. She asked the children about the best way to share. Expecting that they would suggest that one child each gets a car, she was amazed that both children agreed that one child should get both cars — because everybody needs a "parts car" in addition to their working car. These children had grown up in an area where most families had a parts car in the yard for repairs; their sense of fairness was informed by their surroundings and their culture.

It's important to go about a discovery process to see how children are thinking about fairness, in order to know how they feel about rules parents are making.

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Appropriate behaviors: where and when

KEEP IN MIND

- Children's ability to stop something they have begun increases with age. It is unrealistic for adults to think children will remember parental rules or expectations without frequent reminders.

- Preschool children's thinking is egocentric, which means that they see the world from their own perspective, their interests, their needs, and their wants. When adult requests conflict with their own interests, there is often resistance.

- Preschoolers need clear reasons why certain behaviors aren't acceptable in a given situation. Only some instances need clarification about appropriateness; parents don't always need to negotiate with children or over-explain their reasons for a rule or a decision.

REASONS BEHIND THE MESSAGE

Appropriate behaviors: where and when

Parents want their preschoolers to be safe and to develop habits that protect their safety even when the parent isn't around. They also want children to respect the rights and safety of others and to learn the social conventions of their family and community so as not to embarrass themselves or their parents. Learning the subtleties of how society functions is very complex. Many behaviors are not always acceptable or always unacceptable; rather, they are appropriate or inappropriate in a given situation. Running is not always OK: running in one's back yard or the park is acceptable while running in a crowded parking lot or a grocery store is not. Helping children learn about making social and physical judgements is much harder than helping them make rules.

Learning to make sound judgements related to safety and security involves thinking about children's behavior and reasons for allowing or prohibiting the behavior according to three criteria:

- Will the behavior (in this situation) jeopardize the child's safety? If so, rather than creating a rule about the behavior and the situation which could get very elaborate (such as "No running on crowded sidewalks in strange places"), the parent could simply say, "It's not safe for you to run here because you might run into someone. You may run in our yard when we get home."
- Will the behavior (in this situation) harm someone or damage property (such as throwing rocks at a crowded beach or near someone's window)? The child could be told simply, "Those rocks could hurt the children."
- Will the behavior upset parents, family members, or others in the community and could that jeopardize the child's feeling of belonging (such as helping oneself to food in someone else's refrigerator, or undressing in public if it's too hot)? Children can learn the expectations of their families or communities by being reminded that, "when you're in someone else's house, you must ask that person if you may have a glass of juice."

Home visitors can be helpful by identifying and explaining:

why the child's behavior is not acceptable in this situation;

when or where it would be acceptable.

When children are older, they will be able to understand and restrain themselves without adults' reminding them. Before school age, children have a hard time stopping something they have started. Parents should be prepared to remind children often.

STARTING POINT

A most valuable home visitor role is helping parents understand how young children think and react in particular situations. Sometimes a home visitor can be most useful by suggesting, out loud, how a child might be hearing or interpreting the parent's words. This role is difficult for a home visitor because it challenges parents to think about their own behavior. Try this approach only after you are sure of your trust and friendship with the parent.

Appropriate behaviors: where and when

An example for discussion is to ask the parent about a limit or rule she has tried to enforce several times, but which has not worked — the child has disobeyed, or forgotten the rule, or misinterpreted the intent of the rule. Pick a rule to work on that is important to the parent, such as "no running on the stairs," "say 'thank you' when given food," "share toys with your friends".

Ask the parent to act out the way she has explained or enforced the rule. Have simple props available, if helpful. Re-enact together a few recent times when the rule didn't work. Ask the parent to use her actual words and behaviors. You pretend to be the child. First, repeat what the parent has told you about the child's actions and words. Then suggest out loud several different ways the child might be interpreting or forgetting the rule.

Some examples of how a child might interpret a rule or limit —

"I guess it is okay to run on the stairs if there's nothing in the way. Mom doesn't want me to fall on a toy or shoe, but I don't see anything in the way."

"Sam just ran up the stairs. I'm going to try to catch up with him."

"Mom said this morning that I'm growing up. I'm probably big enough to jump down two stairs at a time."

Playing out the child's thinking is a creative role for the home visitor. Try to imagine how the child might be distracted and forget the rule, or think about why the child might assume the rule doesn't apply, or search for simple misunderstandings of the language or phrases used by the parent to explain the rule. Think about patterns of conversation the parent uses that have been confusing to the child before.

Once you have replayed the problem two or three times, the parent may get some clues about what's getting in the way of the rule. You may need to suggest directly some ways to simplify or clarify the rule, how to explain reasons for the rule, or how to provide reminders without getting upset.

If the parent is comfortable with role-playing, include the child in the activity at times the parent is upset with the child's behavior. Understanding rules is complicated for children. This activity keeps the focus on learning when, where, and how rules apply and gives parents more things to try when one explanation hasn't worked.

MESSAGE GROUP THREE

Parents and Children

DOING THINGS TOGETHER

- Sharing activities
- Telling stories
- Mediating messages

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Sharing activities

KEEP IN MIND

- When children participate in warm, bonding activities with adults who play key roles in their lives, there is less chance that children will use drugs or abuse alcohol as adults.
- There are three important kinds of activities that adults and children can share: activities centered on the child, the adult, or on the family.
- Assigning realistic, age-appropriate chores is helpful in developing confidence, responsibility, and a sense of family belonging.
- Shared family time gives parents an opportunity to make their values clear to children through regular reinforcement, modeling, and practice.
- Predictable rituals and shared family time that children can count on give them a sense of security and predictability in their environment that can protect them against later drug use. There needs to be a loving, caring adult to provide this stability even in homes where a parent abuses alcohol or uses other drugs.

REASONS BEHIND THE MESSAGE

Children who establish long-term, supportive relationships with adults are known to be more resilient to later drug use. Home visitors can play a key role not only in being important support people for children in families at high-risk but in helping parents relate to children in ways that build strong, trusting relationships. Spending time with children in shared activities has many benefits for children and families.

Sharing activities

When children and the adults in their lives spend time doing things together, children are able to get the adult responses that they need. Sometimes shared activities may be child-centered (watching a children's television show or reading together) and sometimes children help adults in adult activity (shopping, cooking, or cleaning). Both have value for children. In child-centered activities, children come to feel that their interests and ideas are important to the people they most value. By participating in adult activities, children learn their place and their value in the family, and develop responsibility and skills that will serve them as they grow older.

One of the surprising findings of drug use prevention research is that children who grow up in families where family rituals are preserved are less likely to carry alcohol or drug abuse into the next generation, even when a family member has an addiction. This means that even in homes where a parent makes life difficult because of alcohol abuse or drug use, regular routines led by another family member– like walking to school together everyday – give children stability. A family can protect children by creating family rituals and sticking to them as a way of offsetting family stresses and difficulties.

Family rituals can and should be more than holiday celebrations. They can be woven into the daily routines of families. Home visitors can help parents become aware of what they are already doing and work with them to create simple but predictable routines.

Home visitors can also help parents develop realistic expectations for children's activity. Children do better in school when their parents hold high but realistic expectations for them. Yet children in families where a parent has an addiction problem are often very responsible, sometimes overly so. There is a big difference between children being involved in adult activity (with adults) and children doing adults' work. Young children need to play and be playful. Home visitors can be alert to children who are "little adults" even as preschoolers and help their parents assign tasks more appropriately.

STARTING POINT

Sharing activities

The starting point for this message revolves around getting parents to reflect on how much time the family spends together in all kinds of activities. They should also think about the things that get in the way of doing things together (such as a lack of time and different interests). This activity, talking to parents about shared time, could occur gradually over several weeks as parents learn more and more about how their families do, and don't, spend time together.

Here are some discussion starters, questions home visitors might ask to get some conversation going around this topic:

When do you and your children get the chance to be together, or do things together? What kinds of things do you do? Is it at certain times during the week?

Do you and your children have a good time when you're together? What kinds of things get in the way of having a good time? **Note: specific issues related to family members' drug use or alcohol abuse may arise in this discussion. Home visitors can take this opportunity to highlight the effects of this abuse on family relationships if the home visitor is trained in drug counseling or intervention. If you are not trained, do not attempt to follow through on a discussion of drug or alcohol-related problems if they arise in this activity. Get help from an appropriate professional, such as a drug use intervention counselor.**

Where/when are some of the places in the week that could be made into shared time?

A way to work through this question might be to ask parents and children to make a chart that shows how each person in the family spends each day of the week from morning to night — including play time, watching TV, school, shopping, cleaning, visiting friends. Find some times that might become shared time. For example, going grocery shopping might include the children in a learning game about food, money, or comparing. Also, ask the children to identify times they would like to have spent with adults...when they might have needed help doing something, or an activity would have been more fun if Mom or Dad were there taking part.

Another example: suggest that TV watching time could become shared time when family members aren't watching silently. Encourage parents to talk with their children about what they see and ask questions about ideas in TV programs and commercials. TV time can become more of a family learning/bonding time if the focus is placed on sharing how people feel, or what they are thinking about, when they watch TV together. Beer commercials present a great opportunity to point out how commercials send false messages (messages like "if you drink you will have a lot of friends" or "you need to have beer to have fun.")

Make this an overall activity for parents on discovering how time is spent, how time could be better spent or made more valuable and enriching, and how time together could be made more fun.

Storytelling

KEEP IN MIND

- Storytelling to preschoolers should be simple and fun.
- Stories (read or told) can reduce children's stress by giving them quiet time with the attention of a caring adult.
- Reading and telling stories on a regular basis can have value for adults too by improving the quality of the parent-child relationship and thus serve as a buffer against future drug use and alcohol abuse.

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Story telling

Stories provide an avenue for learning about the world, about ourselves and others, whether we are young children or experienced adults. Around the world and throughout time, parents communicate values and attitudes to their children through the stories they tell. Stories can help reduce a child's stress and even help a child who is sick or in pain. Adults share their experiences with one another not only as a way of building and maintaining relationships but of teaching and learning from one another. Parent support, therapy, or recovery groups benefit from people telling and listening to stories. The art of storytelling, then, is not only for children, nor is it solely for entertainment.

Many educators see storytelling as an important tool for teaching information and morals and also as a way to improve communication. Adults who don't use it are missing out on a powerful ally for helping children learn.

Reading stories to children is another way for parents to build relationships as well as teach children. The experience of reading regularly to children, an important shared activity that could become a favorite family ritual, has value as a drug use prevention strategy. In regularly spending time reading together, parents learn what and how their children think. Through talking about the characters and action in a picture book, parents have the opportunity to ask children about their own experiences and to listen to children's concerns. When parents read to children, they also communicate to them a value about reading and learning. Children who value learning are more likely to enjoy and stay in school and to be at a lower risk for later drug use and alcohol abuse than are children who do not enjoy school.

Home visitors can use the other products in this series to strengthen this important prevention strategy. By reading articles with parents from the Parent's Magazine and discussing parents' ideas and concerns, they are modeling for parents. They can also model reading to children using the Children's Book. To make this an ongoing family activity, home visitors can help parents identify their own and their children's interests and concerns, select appropriate books for children and use the local library and the services of the children's librarian.

STARTING POINT

Anyone can share stories — you, parents, and children. In your home visits, the opportunities are endless to use stories to highlight messages, understand what characters (or real people) are doing, and open up time for parents and children to be together:

Storytelling

Parents read story or picture books to children
Children read story or picture books to parents (interpreting the pictures)
Parents make up a story
Children make up a story
Home visitor suggests a reading list based on family interests
Parents and children watch TV together and talk about the stories they see
Parents and children read the **Ready, Set, Go! Children's Adventure Book: Jess and Jamie Get the Mail**; as home visitor, you may want to participate and help find the messages.

The Parent's Magazine suggests a specific activity for parents to develop and tell their own stories about things that have happened to them in their lives. Home visitors might offer to assist parents in making these stories — listening to "rough drafts," offering ideas for making the stories even more relevant to a child's concern or interest, or helping parents brainstorm original story ideas if parents feel "stuck" for a topic. Look at pages 16 and 17 of the Parent's Magazine to review the main steps in parent story making and storytelling.

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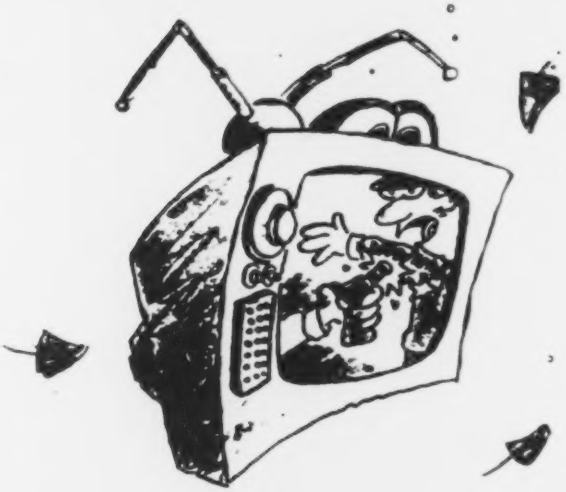

Mediating messages

KEEP IN MIND

- Our society contains numerous, often conflicting, sets of beliefs, ideas, and attitudes offered by individuals and groups.
- Children need mediators — trusted adults who can select and interpret messages — to help them build solid beliefs.
- As children's first and best teachers, parents fulfill the role of mediator for young children more often than other helpful adults such as day care providers and teachers.
- The role of mediating is important, taking time and constant watchfulness for the variety of messages being offered to children.

REASONS BEHIND THE MESSAGE

Mediating messages

Preschool children are relatively indiscriminate learners. They learn from the people and experiences that present themselves as "raw material" for the beginning of knowledge and concepts. They are prepared to treat much of what comes in as equally true or valid because belief systems are in the earliest phases of formation; they can't know enough yet to understand in the same way an adult could understand whether an idea is true or false. In the preschool years, children need other people to sort through the ideas first — people who have their best interests in mind. As these caring adults select, refine, explain, or deflect messages that children hear, they will also help children practice thinking and talking about new ideas. In these interactions, mediators expose children to messages that will contribute to the children's building strong belief systems.

Since parents are children's first teachers, they are also their first mediators. Children receive a variety of messages from immediate family and from their own daily experiences; but they also receive a constant flow of messages from other sources, especially:

> the media, particularly television, which offer thousands of images and words every day about what people believe, how they act, and what they should buy; and
>
> other people around the family, who bring ideas, beliefs, and points of view (stemming from culture, religion, politics, and experiences), all of which may or may not support the family's beliefs and attitudes.

Mediating is an increasingly difficult role for parents to fill because it requires constant monitoring of what children watch and hear, and with whom they spend their time. It also requires parents to think of ways to...

...point out the contrast to a message, if the contrast is a better idea;
...reinforce messages which parents accept;
...deflect messages that they feel are inappropriate.
All of this takes time and energy, two commodities that decrease when stress and responsibilities increase.

Putting energy into becoming a good mediator is worthwhile, however, because it helps children to lay significant groundwork which will serve them well when it comes time to face difficult decisions about drug use and alcohol abuse. It helps in these ways:

> children become acquainted with the concept that not all ideas are legitimate; they do not all have equal value, and some are simply incorrect or wrong;
>
> over the long term, children learn to trust their parents as mediators because they have their best interests in mind, and come to trust the judgments of individuals who are trying to protect and nurture them;
>
> children begin to develop an internal system for evaluating new ideas and comparing them to their ever-growing and maturing beliefs; as they grow as decision-makers, this internal system — with practice — will provide the confidence children need to act decisively and take strong stands against things that are harmful. (This will prove especially critical when peer and social pressures pit children's beliefs against those of their friends.)

Home visitors can assist parents in practicing their mediating skills by looking for incidental occasions when a child is on the receiving end of a message without the benefit of parent mediation. You might suggest ways the parent could either discuss the message with the child, or remove the child from the situation altogether. The home visitor can provide friendly, firm reminders that children are being bombarded by messages, and parents have the right and responsibility to manage that message load.

STARTING POINT

Mediating messages

Television — with all its positive and negative potential — lives with practically every child as another member of the family, like an opinionated uncle who never stops talking. Children are entranced by the medium and place great trust in it as a window on the outside world, and, especially, for clues to how people supposedly think and act. Characters, models, news professionals, and actors seem to portray real people, and real life. Only adults know that television only shows a part of life, and often not realistically.

Watching TV together and dealing with its messages is a critical part of parents' working as mediators. Here is some advice home visitors can give parents for beginning the process of controlling television, which means not letting television's messages get through to preschool children unless the messages are mediated by parents. As a home visitor, you might want to sit down and watch some TV with the family and provide (as examples) some relevant commentary or questions about what you see.

These guidelines will help parents make choices about appropriate shows for preschoolers.

- Look for shows that are specifically designed for preschoolers (ages two to five) — shows like Sesame Street and Mister Rogers' Neighborhood. Many of them are produced with the abilities and interests of preschoolers in mind.
- Choose shows that promote values and messages that you believe in. Control the TV — turn off programs that you think have harmful or wrong ideas.
- Listen to your child to get an idea of his preferences and interests. Some children like everything on TV. You'll need to be more selective and careful about values and appropriateness. Other children lean towards show ideas that interest them — shows with animals, or songs, or characters they like. Choose from shows like these and offer other choices at the same time.

MESSAGE GROUP FOUR

Parents Helping Children By

HELPING THEMSELVES

- Parent attitudes /child attitudes
- Breaking the cycle and becoming a role model

Special note: In discussions and conversations with parents, home visitors may be inclined to share personal experiences as a way of connecting with parents and helping them through example. Home visitors should not share experiences about family drug use or alcohol abuse or personal struggles with these issues; they are best left to other types of professional counselors.

Home visitors can share experiences that relate directly to the messages about children and child rearing in this guide — about setting rules, telling stories, or creative ways for families to spend time together, for example. If you have any doubts about the appropriateness of using yourself as an example, tell your story or experience as if it happened to a third party. This will accomplish the same intent of illustrating by example and maintain your home visitor-parent client relationship.

Parents attitudes/ child attitudes

KEEP IN MIND

- Children learn some of their feelings of confidence, trust, fear, and insecurity from watching how their parents interact with others.
- Children growing up in alcoholic or other types of drug-dependent families develop very different ways of looking at the world than do children who grow up in drug-free homes.
- Alcoholism and other drug addiction are diseases that affect every member of the family.
- Children adapt differently to the stress of having a drug-dependent parent.
- Even if parents are not currently using substances but grew up in such homes, the effects can be felt by their children.
- Home visitors can help families by encouraging outside intervention and by making referrals to appropriate agencies.

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REASONS BEHIND THE MESSAGE

Parent attitudes/ child attitudes

Children learn about the safety and trustworthiness of their world, in large part, from the way their parents view the world. Parents teach children skills and attitudes not only by what they do and say but also by how they feel. Young children, when meeting a stranger for the first time, will look to their parent to see if this is a safe person. If the mother smiles and is friendly to the person, the child is likely to approach him or her, but if the mother is cool or angry, the child is likely to withdraw. This skill is called social referencing. It is a useful way for young children to learn about the world when the parents' perceptions are generally accurate. But if a parent is unduly fearful, paranoid, or depressed, his or her reactions are also passed on to the children.

In families where drug use or alcohol abuse is a problem, family members learn to deny the reality of the situation and cover for the abuser. The child may be told that "Mommy is tired" when she has passed out on the couch from overusing drugs or alcohol. The unpredictability of the parent's actions can lead to feelings of insecurity, fear, anger, shame, guilt and/or blame on the part of the child. These learned feelings become part of how the child operates in and sees the world.

STARTING POINT

Parent attitudes/ child attitudes

Reflection is the beginning of change, and when parents' attitudes and life outlooks present barriers to children's happiness and development, home visitors must begin with small steps. The experiences and beliefs of every parent must always be respected, if not always understood. Home visitors can provide food for thought for parents to begin the internal process of examining their own world views. The decision to make a change is theirs.

This might best be done if the home visitor shares some examples of when the attitudes of another person proved deeply affecting, either positively or negatively. Use this technique to illustrate how the attitudes of one person can transfer to others, especially children. By first offering these examples, and then encouraging the parent to add similar experiences of his or her own to the conversation, the concept of parent attitudes/child attitudes and their interaction can be introduced.

For any of the following that apply, ask the parent how she felt after:

Hearing a speech or sermon that was invigorating or motivating

Watching a love story that made you feel romantic or sad

Listening to someone tell a joke that still makes you laugh if you think of it today

Having dinner ruined by a family member who comes home from work depressed

Calling a friend to be cheered up

Breaking the cycle and becoming a role model

KEEP IN MIND

- Children of alcoholics and/or addicts are more likely to have low self-image, depression, and school and behavior problems than other children, but children of recovering parents are more like children whose parents have never had an addiction problem.
- Parents who experienced abusive childhoods are likely to repeat the cycle unless they have had a stable, nonabusive relationship with a parent or other adult during childhood, have been in therapy at some time, or have stable, satisfying nonabusive relationships with a partner. Those who have one or more of these factors in their lives tend to be nonabusive and to have secure, confident children.
- Children's sense of personal value and healthy self concept are critical in buffering the risk of later drug use and alcohol abuse. It is related to parents' own sense of value.
- Parents whose own parent(s) had problems with alcohol or other drugs are at higher risk to use such substances themselves. They are better able to break the cycle, though, if they are conscious of their heightened risk for drug use/alcohol abuse and are deliberate in planning family rituals that do not include alcohol and drugs.
- Home visitors can play an important role in supporting families at high-risk . They can encourage parents to get outside help. They can also identify opportunities to develop family rituals and ways to encourage strong, caring relationships between children and their parents.

Problems including drug use, alcohol abuse, physical and sexual abuse, and low self-concept sometimes run in families. Not all parents from abusive families will continue the cycle with their own children, though many will. Many others may not actually use drugs or abuse alcohol, but they may have difficulties with relationships, making and carrying out decisions, or self-confidence. All of these parental difficulties can affect children's development.

Breaking the cycle and becoming a role model

Researchers have studied high-risk parents who do not continue the cycle to see what factors have helped them break the pattern. They have found that one of the most important buffers for young children is having their drug-using parents recover. Studies showed that children of alcoholic parents often showed signs of depression, poor self image and problems in school when their parents were drinking or using drugs. But after their parents were in recovery for two years, they acted like children whose parents did not use drugs or abuse alcohol. When high-risk parents realize that they have a problem, seek help, and take conscious steps to change the way their family functions, they decrease the possibility of continuing the cycle.

Many parents have had negative childhoods but have gone on to have secure, confident children. This does not happen as a fluke. The parents who have broken the cycle have usually had some type of intervention. Many of them have received outside counseling or therapy during which they work through their childhood problems. Parents who can't remember their childhood or who idealize or excuse their parents are at higher risk for repeating the cycle.

The "resilient" parents also have had trusting relationships in their lives through which they learned that others can be counted on to be emotionally available when they needed help. These supportive relationships seem to correct the effects of their dysfunctional parental relationship and allow them to form close, stable partnerships with mates, something that is less likely to happen without having had that experience. Work with teachers, therapists, home visitors, support groups, all provide the opportunity for parents to re-learn ways of relating to other people.

Home visitors can play an important role in supporting high-risk families by encouraging parents with histories of drug use/alcohol abuse (their own or their parents') to get outside help, to support them in their treatment/recovery, plan family rituals, and establish strong, caring relationships with other nonabusive adults.

STARTING POINT

Breaking the cycle and becoming a role model

More than any other message suggested in this guide, a message about parents making personal changes is the most difficult to begin promoting. The circumstances and experiences which have brought adults to their present situations and attitudes are complex and well-ingrained. Many parents may have become distracted from or given up personal crusades to improve their lives.

While this message, and this suggested activity, cannot hope to "turn around" lives, they can begin by planting the idea of the potential for change. Real change begins with a personal commitment of some kind, followed by seeking out the resources needed to accomodate that change. From counseling and treatment practices, there are two specific types of commitment and search for resources which prove most effective:

> parents who make the commitment to change because of their children — to improve their life conditions to give their children a better shot at happiness and health — have a tangible, compelling reason to pursue that change; and
>
> parents who seek out social support, from community organizations, parent groups, close friends, religious groups, and/or professional counseling, have better chances for maintaining their efforts for change.

The following three stories are taken from actual experiences. These parents shared their stories for the Home Visitor's Guide to offer realistic but hopeful proof that parents can change their lives to become role models for their children. Home visitors are invited to share these stories with parents and encourage discussion about them, if the stories are relevant to the families, and if the home visitor feels it is appropriate for parents to engage in this discussion depending on individual histories and your relationship with the parent. Feel free to make copies of these stories and share them with parents.

You may want to use the following discussion guide questions, after parents have read the stories privately, to help target the main ideas the people in the stories used to make changes in their lives:

> What did the person in the story feel was "wrong" with his or her life? How did he or she come to that realization?
>
> Why did the person decide to make a change? What exactly was the reason? (You may want to probe about the child's role in the story.)
>
> How did the person go about helping himself or herself? What did he or she do? Do you think that was realistic? Could most people do that?
>
> Do you think the person is better off now? How can you tell? Do you think things will continue to get better? How can that person make sure that he or she doesn't "go backwards?"
>
> Do you know anybody like the person in the story? Would the solutions you read about in the story work for that person? Why or why not?

The three stories follow:

ANN

I was a pretty normal kid. I had a lot of friends, I was good at sports and loved playing them. When I was a teenager, my life changed. I experienced a spinal cord injury. I use a wheelchair now and while I won't get any worse, I won't get any better. I'm also an alcoholic, in recovery now for almost two years.

Most people don't know what a disability actually does to you. It can destroy you. I got very depressed. It wasn't anything at all for me to stay in the house for five weeks at a time and just sit there. I didn't have a lot of support from my family, and my friends began to drop off. I started relating only to the ones who would drink with me.

I felt like I was on death row. There really wasn't anyone in my life at that time who was supportive enough to get through to me. My family wouldn't talk about my disability, and still won't. I just shut up, and that was a big mistake. You have to have someone to talk things out with. I felt like I was failing my family if I couldn't give them what they want — that is, for me to walk again. I felt if I couldn't give them what they want, what am I worth? Those feelings contributed to my alcohol abuse. They didn't cause it — I was on the way anyway — but they contributed to it.

A lot of people would say I was being weak. I wasn't. I was just losing a battle. I was losing a battle that I didn't want to be in. I didn't put myself in it.

Then, nine years ago, I got pregnant. I stopped drinking and using drugs immediately. That was a killer — coming off suddenly is unreal and coming off by yourself is something else — the shakes, you're sick, and everything else. But the child mattered. Something finally mattered. What I did was put all my feeling into the baby. In a sense that's too bad, but not really because in the long run, I am learning to care about me again by caring for someone else, by loving someone else to the degree that I love him.

I've learned with time — a lot of time — to start being patient with myself. I didn't get there right away. The depression was overwhelming and it was so much easier to just get loaded when I was in pain. I went back to drinking after my son was born. Sure, sometimes I had a little too much but I believed the alcohol was helping me cope with the problems I had. There was nothing wrong with me that I couldn't settle with the bottle.

When you have a little one around, you don't want to be that way. You start getting angry at the little one, and he doesn't deserve it. I didn't want to get that way and I knew I could. I was very depressed and started having panic attacks again. Finally I got to the point where I knew I couldn't do it alone. I started seeing a psychologist who confronted me about my drinking. I couldn't deny it any longer and agreed to go to meetings with other people who have the same problem.

There are a lot of people who will accept you for who you are, even though at first you feel nobody will...it's hard to get out of feeling that way. But you have to keep trying to trust yourself.

With the right support systems, you can do that. I'm in school studying to be a special education teacher and I have definite career goals now, and people who support me in reaching them. I'm married and have a wonderful son. Unlike my family, my husband and son and I talk, really talk. Sure, there are some things they don't tell me and I make sure they have people outside the family to talk to also. I know they have thoughts and feelings they don't share with me and I want to be sure they don't keep them inside.

I listen to myself now — not to people who would like to tell me how good I am because of my disability. And I have supportive people in my life now. I do have to be aware that I could be prone to depression and substance abuse again. It will be a battle for the rest of my life. But for today, I'm OK.

TINA AND MILAN

Milan

When I was a young teenager, I made up my mind that I would never have children of my own. I was scared of babies. Later, when I was in the Marine Corps, another guy in the band insisted I hold his infant son. I was petrified, but I did it just to get him off my back. I never dreamed I'd be the father of 11 children by the time I was 40!

Tina

Milan had a pretty average childhood in a small town in the midwest. Mine was anything but average. I never went to the same school for even a whole year. My mother deserted me and my brother while my father was away on a sales trip. I was about three at the time. Dad was 22. He married again to an alcoholic who committed suicide when I was 10. My brother and sisters and I spent some time in a Home for Children — the one stable time in our lives. In my early teens I got in with the wrong crowd and eventually ended up in a lot of trouble. But all the time I knew life didn't have to be that bad. It could be different. I made up my mind I'd have a big family and make a good home for my kids. I was lucky that I got placed in a very good foster home in San Diego. My foster Mom, Carrie, was just the right balance between strict and fair, and she has a great sense of humor. Through her kids, I joined a religious group that our family is still active with and I met Milan.

Milan

My mother was a good role model for me when it comes to being patient with kids. She is a music teacher. My dad wasn't very affectionate, but he let me know by his actions that he liked having me around. I was never a good student, though, and I think I just fell through the cracks. Nobody really tried to help me do better. I was a pretty laid back kid, so more attention went to my older brother and sister. I like doing things with kids — teaching them to cook or doing woodworking. I try to keep a check on everybody's school work so nobody gets away with not doing his best. But I still am uncomfortable taking care of babies!

Tina

One of my biggest influences on how to be a parent was Head Start. I was a Head Start parent for five years when we lived in Idaho. I learned about what you can expect from kids at different ages and how to do all kinds of activities with them. I became a teacher's aide. The head teacher was so good with kids! Watching how she talked with them and played with them, a lot of her ideas rubbed off on me. I was like a sponge. I had no example of being a good parent to young children in my own life, so I watched everything I could and got to practice through working with her in the classroom.

Milan

Tina and I don't always agree about raising the kids. She tends to be a lot stricter than I am. I want to talk things over with the kids, and she wants to just say, "This is how it is." We talk about everything with each other, though, just to keep order in the house. There's so much happening all the time with this many kids.

Tina

I agree with Milan that the kids need to give their own ideas about things, but I say **we** make the rules. They came up with the idea of a checklist for chores and sometimes we let them decide what their punishment should be if they do something wrong. But I don't think little kids are able to decide what they should be allowed to do or not do.

One carryover from my childhood is that I have a lot of anger. I try to keep it from spilling out at the kids. I have to be really careful about that. I think my religion has helped me a lot, especially about not physically or verbally abusing children and about the importance of teaching them to obey their parents. There is also a clear prohibition against drugs and alcohol in my particular faith because they result in harmful effects on families and society as a whole. I have a very addictive personality and I know that without my involvement in a community of people like this, I'd probably have been an alcoholic or addict instead of drinking too much coffee and cola! Between my birth mother and father and their various spouses, I have 17 half or full brothers and sisters, and I'm the only one who is not either crazy or an addict or both.

Milan

Tina has a lot of determination, and always had in her mind that she would raise her family to be different. But still I think that without Head Start and support from the members of our faith, we'd really be in over our heads about now.

Tina
That's for sure. But I don't have any desire to rehash my childhood. I have a relationship with my father and his new wife now, and we have Milan's mom, who's very supportive. Some day my kids will have to know about my mother, but not now. For now I just want them to enjoy their family and school life.

NADINE

I'm finding out now that my relationship with my mother is different from the way I thought it was. I thought we were a typical family, like the Brady Bunch. But my mother was physically abused by my stepfather when I was growing up. Both my parents smiled at me when I was a kid and said everything was fine. You know, he had money — not a lot — but we always travelled, always had food, always had clothes...a lot of things some of the other kids in my school didn't have. So it made me feel good that we had a nice home.

But he was real scary, too. I'd wake up in the middle of the night hearing my mother screaming. That made me afraid to stay with a man and accept anything that men tell me as the truth. I'm a real independent person in the sense that I do what I think is best for me, not what other people tell me.

My ideas and expectations are also very different from my mother's. She was very dominating to her kids. For a long time I was successful in school, so she thought I should be a teacher. She'd say I should be in this program, or do this or that. Finally one day I told her that I'd decided to go to college to be a nurse. I felt I could only be successful if I did what I'd always wanted to do.

I think it's made a big difference being part of a program that shows me how to go back to school and gives me support in taking care of my kids. I want to make sure my kids get a good education. To do that, I have to finish my education first.

I think having children has been the real turning point for me. I looked at my kids and didn't want them feeling the way I feel. I'm trying to teach them that if you don't deal with issues, it sets a pattern and comes back on you. When something doesn't go right, I explain it to them and help them with it. I also let them know that I'm aware of what they did and tell them not to let it happen again. I try not to let things slide.

I need to give them support and build a support group for myself with some other women. When you can't cope, it's easy to teach your kids to be that way. They get your problem, then they need counseling, too. Without a support group, who's going to take care of my kids? I sure can't depend on my family. I can't change how my relatives lead their lives.

I am going to make this change for myself and my kids. I'm trying a new approach, saying to the people in the group who show me they are true friends, "Well, I need your help. Will you help me?" I'm willing to ask, so that I can believe someone is out there to help me when I need it. I've just got to take the initiative to help myself.

OVERALL ACTIVITIES

In addition to the starting points suggested for each message, home visitors can work with parents in a variety of overarching activities that will support all of the messages.

The ideas listed below will help parents develop their own skills and confidence while becoming more involved in their communities. The more supportive a family is of sustaining drug-free lifestyles, the more likely children will develop the skills they need to resist drugs when they're older. Families can be more supportive of children when the communities they live in support those values.

Although it's crucial for parents to feel trust in their home visitors, long-term dependence on home visitors is not helpful. An important aspect of the home visitor's job is to know when a parent is ready to be introduced to support contacts or needs that extra "push" in the community. Any activities that bring parents into association with like-minded people who support the parents' values and value drug-free life styles are important prevention efforts. Parents may need more than a referral to agencies or activities...they may need you to provide a bridge between your relationship with the parent and real community involvement.

Here are settings to nurture that involvement:

Community play groups for parents and children

Classes and workshops for parents offered through hospitals, community mental health agencies, preschools, or churches

Preschool programs (such as Head Start or Even Start) with strong parent involvement components

Library programs, story hours, or association with the children's librarian to foster family literacy

Self-help groups for parents with drug use or alcohol abuse problems or those who have relatives with these problems

FOR FURTHER READING

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Your guide to drug use prevention ideas for preschool children

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Your guide to drug prevention
ideas for preschool children

READY!

What does drug education have to do with preschool children?

The reasons people turn to drugs can often be traced back to their early years, the years when children need to begin healthy habits. Those healthy habits, which will make a difference later, take root as children gradually learn to make safe choices, understand how their parents are helping them grow, and feel confident and secure in their abilities and value as human beings.

Children who practice and acquire these ideas even when they are as young as three or four have an easier time recognizing the danger of drugs later on. Strong children grow up to be strong adults.

This guide includes constructive ideas about helping young children stay healthy and safe. Why has it been written especially for parents? Because parents have more influence on their preschool children than anyone else. You can be the best teacher in the world. Your child wants to learn from you.

We hope *Ready!* helps you help your child get ready for a healthy, drug-free life.

Look for the children's adventure book — **Ready, Set, Go!** *— which tells a story showing ways to give healthy messages to your children.*

A note about the word "parent:" many different kinds of people, both male and female, fill the role of parent for children — grandparents, aunts and uncles, friends, and guardians. If you are the main caregiver for a preschool child, the ideas in this magazine are for you. The ideas presented are applicable to both boys and girls.

READY!

Your guide to drug use prevention for preschool children

What's INSIDE?

Experts agree that the best way to prepare preschoolers for a drug-free life as adults is to help them in four areas of growth.

This guide is divided into four sections that reflect those areas.

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SECTION ONE

Helping children feel *safe and secure*

When children feel safe and secure, they develop many of the qualities that help them avoid drugs throughout their lives. They trust people who earn the right to be trusted. They learn to trust their own decisions. They have healthy social skills and get along well with others.

When parents or other caregivers provide a safe, nurturing, supportive environment, each child can think these things with confidence:

Someone will take care of me.
Someone will give me advice when I need it.
I should listen to the ideas of people I trust.
I can learn how to make smart decisions.
I am a valuable human being.
My ideas can be good ideas.

All of these beliefs contribute to a child's sense of self-worth, confidence, and ability to make decisions based on self-respect, respect for others, and the hope to be healthy and happy.

Sooner or later, every child will face a situation where drugs will be offered. When that time comes, a child needs to feel confident that he or she can make strong, correct decisions. That depends on feeling capable, valuable, and worthwhile.

The articles on the next six pages show how parents can help children be safe and feel safe. The first article provides some ideas on how parents protect their children in the real world. It's a lot more than just keeping them from physical harm! Another article gives some ideas on how to encourage children to be confident. The final article in this section suggests ways to help children develop their own good qualities – and make those qualities even stronger.

In this CRAZY world,

parents protect their children in many ways

Before children can make healthy decisions, they need to feel safe. They can't play, sleep well, try hard, or learn how to protect themselves unless they trust the people who take care of them. Protecting children is one of the hardest jobs of being a parent.

Parents make decisions every day that keep their children healthy and safe, and children gradually get the idea that parents protect them in many different ways. When children feel that they're living in an environment that's secure, they can begin to explore all of the ways they can become good decision makers and to learn slowly to take care of themselves. Both building confidence in themselves and trusting their parents' decisions lay the foundation for drug prevention.

How do some parents protect their children? We asked parents around the country, and here are some of their ideas.

HOTEL
PIZZA
THE CITY

"I try to tell my kids to come home and tell us if someone does something bad to them or something that makes them uncomfortable."

"I get them to think about the future... show them there's hope. They have options."

"I make sure they know enough English to be comfortable in this culture."

"I take care of myself so I can take better care of them."

"I stay aware. I know the background of the people taking care of my boy, and find out what his day was like when I wasn't there."

"I show them that I don't have to wear expensive clothes to like myself."

"I talk to my child about people touching her body and give her action to follow. I mean, saying, 'No!'"

"I make surprise visits to day care to make sure everything is going right."

"If I'm not there, I leave them with someone responsible."

"I show my kids ways to solve a problem other than hitting."

"I'm going to help them get the most out of going to Head Start."

"I talk to my child's teacher to help her understand my child better."

"I try to help them understand that having what the other kids have doesn't make you a better person."

"I listen to what children have to say about their day."

"We teach them to listen to their survival instincts...like if you don't feel comfortable with somebody, stay away from them."

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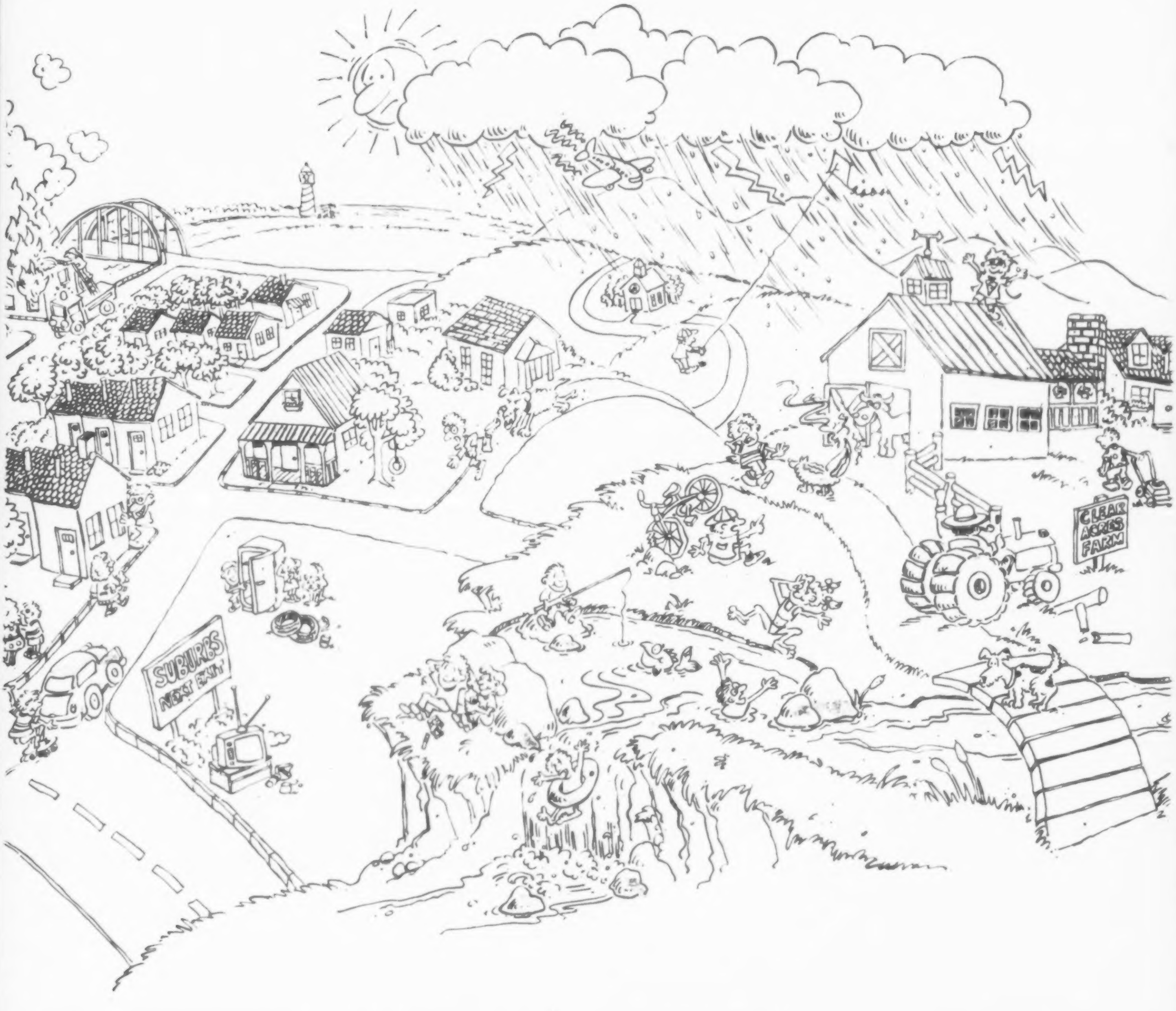
HOW PARENTS PROTECT THEIR CHILDREN



Are there some things you will absolutely not let your preschooler do? Every parent has a list. For example, some parents won't let their children...

- Cook
- Cut with scissors
- Cross the street
- Walk to school alone
- Play outside in the dark
- Accept money for helping with chores
- Take sips of beer or other alcoholic drinks
- Be disrespectful
- Cuss or swear
- Talk back

What's on your list?

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

WHAT you say and HOW you say it

Your words affect how children feel and act

Simple and clear rules help children feel secure. When the rules stay the same day after day, children learn rather than test limits.

However, making good rules is only half the battle. Helping children **remember** the rules is the other big challenge. Children may actually know the rules but forget them when impulses get in the way.

Questions

One good way to help children think about their actions is to ask questions rather than nag, lecture, or punish. The right kinds of questions, and the right tone, can change a child's behavior.

Questions can make children think about their behaviors

Parent: What are you doing now?

Child: Playing with my trucks.

Parent: What did I ask you to do instead?

Child: Pick up the toys.

Questions help children remember the house rules

Parent: Honey, what's our rule about the soccer ball?

Child: Use it outside, not in the house.

Questions can gain cooperation

Parent: If you keep all of the toys, will Sam want to play with you?

Child: No.

Parent: What do you think Sam would like?

Child: To share my toys?

Or, if children are arguing at the table, ask "What can you do to make this a happier dinner-time for everybody?"

Child: "Not yell or fight at the table."

Questions can help children learn consequences

Parent: What could happen if you don't pick up your toys and someone steps on your car?

Child: Maybe it would break.

Parent: Yes, but did you also think that maybe the person would fall?

Simple questions help children reflect on what they are doing and on what might happen next. Confidence begins when children connect their actions to results. **That's** when they begin to feel more **in control.**

Confidence Busters

When children forget the rules, parents sometimes use the occasion to show that they are the boss. These tactics don't work. Have you ever heard a parent say these things, which only irritate or confuse children?

"Even a baby knows to stay in the yard. Do I need to put you in a playpen to keep you where you belong?"

"What will the neighbors say if they see you wan-

➤

dering around like that? They will think you don't have a good mother."

➤ "If you climb over the fence to get out of the yard you'll cut your hand off."

➤ "If you stay in the yard today as I told you, you can have ice cream for dessert."

➤ "If I've told you once, I've told you a thousand times, stay in the yard! You know how unsafe it is for children to wander around..."

Confidence Builders

It's hard for children to build their confidence all by themselves. A lot of support needs to come from outside from people who tell them they've done a good job, or that they have special qualities that give them value as people. Here are a few suggestions for different ways to build a child's confidence through your words:

"I hear you did something exciting at day care today. Did you button your coat by yourself? Tell me all about it!"

"That was a great idea! Did you think of that all by yourself?"

"You did a great job picking up your toys. Thanks for helping!"

"Dad needs your help. Can you put these clothes away with me?"

"When you take care of your sister like that, it really makes me proud and happy."

"That painting has really nice, bright colors! May I take it to work and show everybody?"

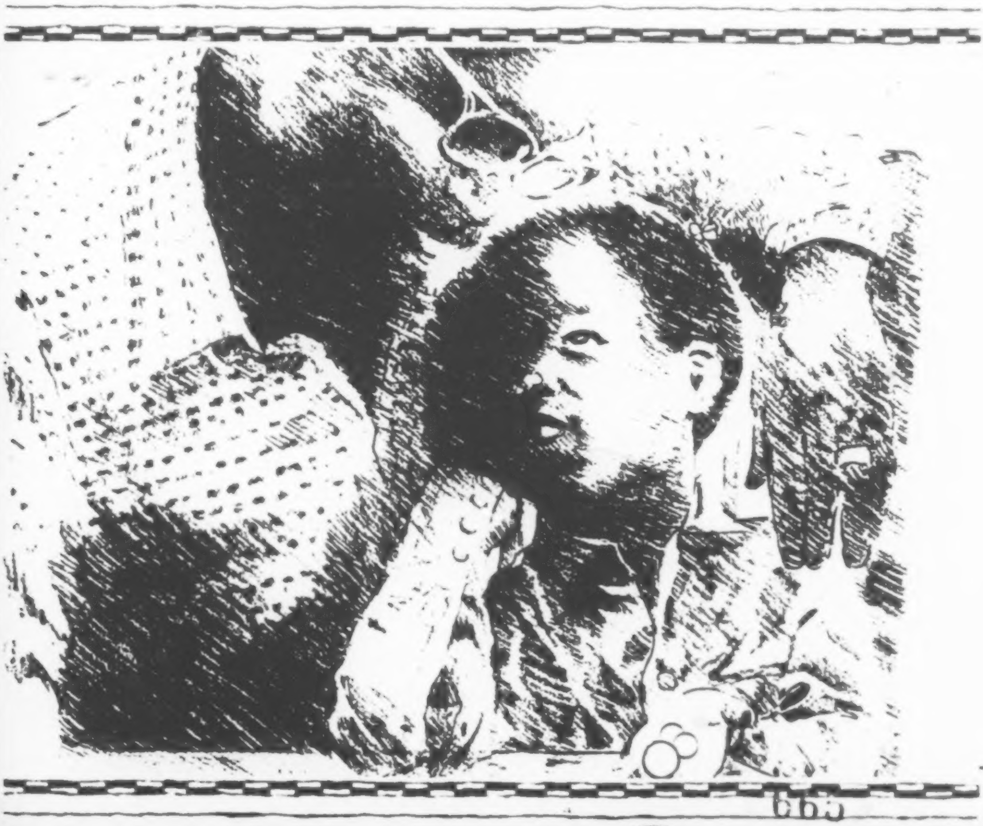
"It's OK that you made a mistake, honey. Next time you will try to do better, and I will help you if you want."

Some other ways to boost confidence:

➤ Watch how your child is trying to figure something out or solve a problem. Be ready to offer guidance or ideas if he needs it, but don't take over the project.

➤ Be specific in your praise about what it is about your child that makes him special. Make each child feel valued for his own strengths and talents.

➤ Treat a mistake as a learning experience for next time, not an occasion to criticize or punish. Talk with your child about what went wrong and come up with ideas about how to avoid the mistake next time.



➤ Put a new slant on familiar compliments like "You're beautiful." A child isn't only beautiful by the traditional definitions. Encourage him to see that his smile, his way of talking with people, or the color of his skin has a quality of beauty about it.

➤ Don't overdo praise. Be sincere about it!

CHILDREN'S GOOD QUALITIES

Seeing What's Good About Your Child

Whatever your child's strengths are, you can help the child develop them

Children are full of surprises. One day they can hardly stand on their own two feet. The next day they can turn on light switches all by themselves.

Every day in a preschooler's life brings a new skill or a new idea to try. People grow in their preschool years more than in any other time of their lives. We need to believe that preschool children are capable of doing **more** every day, not **less**. But we also need to remember that each child has a special personality. What's "good" about a child may be hard to see at first.

Let's take the story of Annie and her four-year-old son, James. Annie likes to be with people. Her friends call her the life of the party. James, on the other hand, is shy around people. When they go out to the park, James hides behind his mother and cries. Annie wants James to be like she was when she was little: outgoing and friendly. So she pushes him to play with the other kids. That only makes James cry louder.

"I'm worried about James," Annie tells her friends. "Is he always going to be this way? Will he turn out to be a mama's boy?" Chances are, James will never be as outgoing as his mom. But his shyness might be one of his strengths, not a weakness. Maybe it's James' way of watching the world as he learns about it, thinking carefully before he joins in.

When parents focus on a child's weaknesses, the child will lose confidence. It becomes harder for the child to think of himself in a positive way. That can cause stress, create discipline problems, and limit a child's thinking. A better way to help James could be to introduce him little by little to new people and new situations. Let him form friendships at his own pace. This can help him build his confidence in his ability to make choices.

Children who feel accepted for who they are right now are more comfortable trying new things. When parents can identify what is good and positive about their children (as Annie began to recognize James' strength in dealing with people one-on-one) and find activities that build those strengths even more, a child's confidence grows.

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Take a moment to think about your child's good qualities.

Write your child's name or nickname here.

____

Now list three things that your child does well. These could be talents that you have, too — but try to think of at least one that is not like yours.
(An example: My child has a lively imagination.)

____

____

____

You probably know your child better than anyone. List three qualities or abilities your child has — good qualities, remember — that might surprise other people.
(An example: my child can tell a story by looking at the pictures in a book.)

____

____

____

Choose one of the qualities you listed above. What are a few things you could do together this week to bring out that quality in him or her?
(An example: my son likes to recognize letters, so we'll watch for signs on the road so he can say his ABCs.)

____

____

____

What's good about my child?

Some parents say...

"My daughter is really good at putting together puzzles."

"How people are feeling is important to my son. If someone is sad, he'll come right ove and ask what's wrong."

"Pete helps put away the pots and pans. I think it makes him feel good to help me in the kitchen."

"Mica gets frustrated when she tries something new, but she stays with it. You can see in her eyes that she works really hard to do it right."

"My child seems to have his grandfather's artistic abilities. He has a nice sense of what colors go together."

"I think my twin daughters are going to be gymnasts. They are very active and well coordinated."

"Matt remembers to brush his teeth every morning. I don't have to remind him."

"My boy has a good appetite. At least I know his body is strong and healthy!"

"My three-year-old has an incredible memory. She can tell me stories word for word!"

"My child wakes up eager to go to day care. He makes my mornings easier."

"Kenna likes to sing. It makes her happy."

"My son must have been born funny because he sure makes me laugh."

"I don't know where Jessie comes up with some things, but she sure has a wild imagination."

What's good about your child?

Books can build confidence.

Ask your home visitor, local book seller, librarian, or your child's teacher for books in which children...

- solve a problem
- learn something new
- do something with parents
- find out how to be safe

SECTION TWO

Helping children by *doing things together*

One thing we know for sure: when children spend time with adults who are important in their lives, they are less likely to use drugs when they grow up. Having fun, telling stories, doing chores **together** helps children to...

... develop trust in the people who care for them
... believe that their own interests have value
... know that they're part of a loving family
... learn new skills
... do better in school
... practice making healthy decisions

Doing things together also gives adults some time to ...

... learn what their children are really like
... tell stories that have important messages
... pass on knowledge of how to do things
... mediate the many messages directed at children from the outside
... show the importance of work in everyone's life

All of this adds up to helping children feel valuable, capable, responsible, and part of something worthwhile – a family. This is excellent preparation for a drug-free life.

Following are some ideas for busy adults to find the time to do things with children. First are some ways to share chores and explore the amazing benefits of family rituals. You'll have the chance to write a story to tell your children. Then find out how to deal with all of the messages coming at children from friends, television, and commercials, messages that you might not want your children to believe. And LeVar Burton of *Reading Rainbow* talks about making good use of TV time.

HAPPY TOGETHER!

Doing things with children means helping them learn and feel loved at the same time

Do you think children are always underfoot because they want to get on your nerves? Well, maybe sometimes. But most often, they just want to watch. They want to learn from the "experts" on life. They want to learn from you.

Children often learn by watching and then doing. This is a complex process...while children are watching and learning, they are also practicing important thinking skills like figuring out new words, getting the idea of planning, and doing something step by step. They also start to think about what went wrong so they can make changes and do it better the next time.

The time you spend together – making dinner, working in the yard – is also a good time to just talk: to talk about what you believe in, plan together for the future, listen to what is happening in each other's lives. When children spend a great deal of time just being with adults who care about them, they are more likely to talk openly about their worries, problems, and fears.

One good way to be together is to turn work time into family time. Here are some good things your preschooler can help you do. Remember: Do these things together!

Safety first!

Never let preschoolers take part in activities that involve things that are hot, sharp, electrical, or poisonous. It's much better to have a child help by beating the eggs in a bowl, not stirring them over the stove.

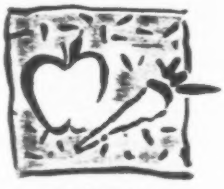
Choose the right job!

It's true, sometimes it would be easier to do it yourself. But thinking of the right way to let your child help will contribute to his or her learning, and free you up to do other things. Ask first, "What can my child do?" rather than listing the reasons why a child can't help.

What can a preschooler do to help?

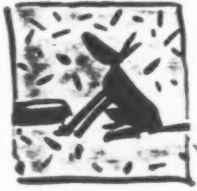
Clothes

- Match socks
- Sort clothes into piles
- Hand wash small articles
- Fold towels
- Put clothes in drawers



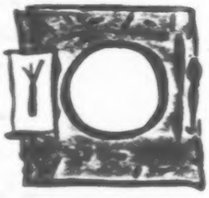
Meals

- Wash fruits and vegetables
- Stir batter
- Cut soft food with a table knife
- Spread peanut butter or jelly
- Set the table
- Shape hamburgers or cookies
- Husk corn
- Grease baking pans
- Mix juices
- Pour cereal
- Knead bread
- Roll and cut dough



Pets

- Let the dog or cat into the house
- Pour food into bowl with a scoop
- Brush the dog's fur
- Fill the water bowl



Cleaning up

- Rinse unbreakable dishes
- Dust
- Sweep
- Pick up toys
- Mop up spills

Outside

- Rake leaves
- Shovel light snow
- Plant seeds in pots
- Pick up litter
- Sweep the sidewalk
- Help wash the car
- Water flowers
- Get the mail
- Pick weeds from the walk

Shopping

- Help make a list
- Pick items off the shelf
- Make limited choices (pears or apples today?)
- Put away groceries

Allow plenty of time!

The job won't get done fast if your child helps. But children become confident by taking their time to do a job and by learning from their own mistakes. If the chore needs to be done quickly, do it yourself or let your child help in a small way. (Have him make a little pizza by himself rather than help you make the whole pie.)

Practice makes perfect!

If your preschooler helps, the final product won't be perfect. But that's not important. Your child needs to know that you appreciate what she has done. Next time, or when she's ready, add another step and encourage her to work a little harder or do a better job.

Include, don't assign! There's a big difference between including children in your chores and having children do adult work. In families where there is a lot of stress, young children sometimes have to get their own meals, put themselves to bed, and take care of themselves. This might teach some sense of responsibility, but too much responsibility at too early an age can be harmful.

It's the end of the day, and you're wondering where the time went. The children are asleep, and you wish you had done something with them today. You know that spending time together gives children a sense of belonging and helps everyone learn to be part of a family. And it builds the idea of responsibility as the family shares work and fun.

But there's not enough time and too much to do. Some families have found ways to get around it. Here are some of their ideas – creative ways to grab some time, from a few seconds to a whole day – to establish some family customs.

"On weekends, I take my oldest daughter to the library. We each pick out a book or magazine and show each other what we got."

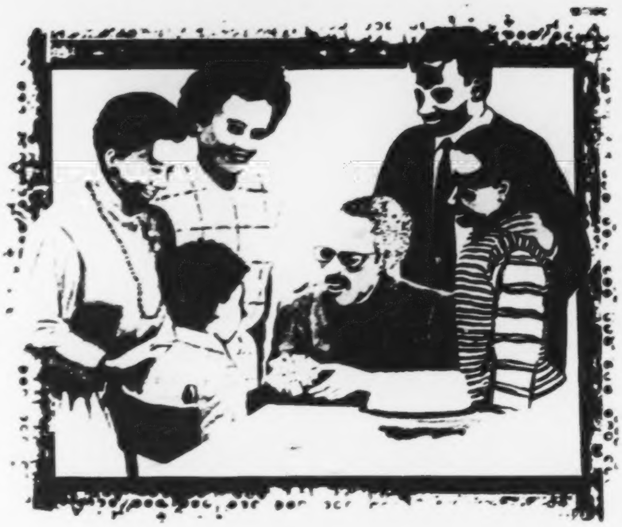
Creating

"We have lots of family get-togethers, sometimes with other families."

"When I leave my daughter at school every morning, we rub noses to give each other good luck."

"Every other weekend, we get the blankets off the beds and camp out in the living room. We make popcorn and watch TV."

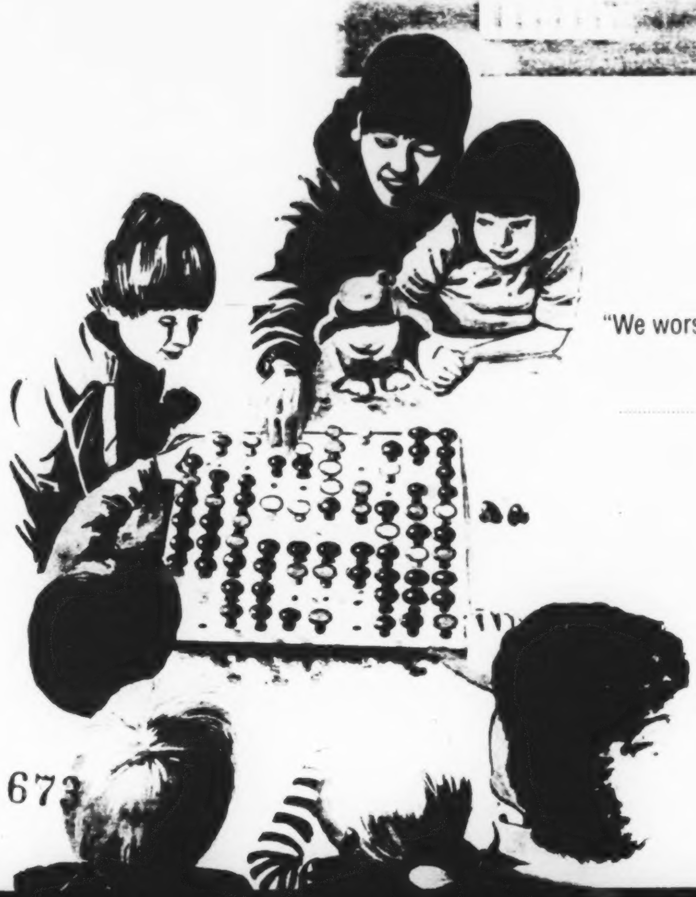
"We invite people to be a part of our family celebrations. We all put money together and buy that person a gift. We tell stories and sing."



"We play airplane –
I fly my kids through the air."

Customs

"We go shopping sometimes."



"We worship together."

"We go to Indian dance performances together."

"We play games together right before bed on Sunday."

"First thing every Saturday, we clean the house and everyone helps."

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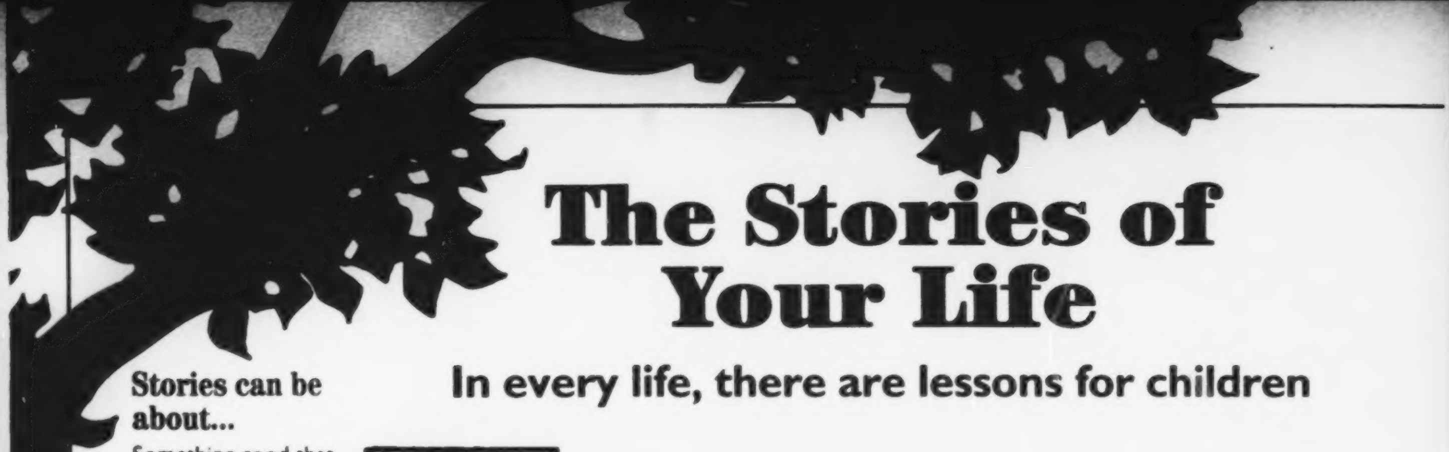

The Stories of Your Life

In every life, there are lessons for children

Children love stories.

Stories keep children entertained, and they're a great way to end the day. They also fill out children's ideas about the world. Most children don't get to see much firsthand in their early years. With a story they can travel anywhere – even through time.

As much as stories from books, movies, or TV, children love to hear about things that happened to their mothers and fathers when they were growing up. And why not? That combines two of their favorite things – parents and stories.

It's easy to tell a true story about your life. Here are the basic steps to "making a story" to tell your child.

Stories can be about...

Something good that happened to you

Something that shows how you solved a problem

A lesson you learned that stays with you even today

An event that gave you more insight into your parents

A major event in your family's history

Something funny

Something that will remind your child of something in his or her own life

An event that has the same important message as another story your child recently heard or saw

Some things to remember when you make and tell a story:

➤ Let your child take part in the story telling. Ask questions like, "What do you think happens next," or "Do you think that was a good idea?"

➤ Tell it like a story — use phrases like "Once upon a time" and "One day, there was..." to make it feel like a real story.

➤ Tell the story as if you were talking about someone else. For example, rather than saying, "One day I rode my bike past the first pine tree," say, "One day Papa rode his bike past the first pine tree." Make it a story about you, but more like something that happened in the past. It's easier for a young child to understand.

➤ Use lots of interesting details. Describe things with colors and sizes and textures — try to help your child draw a picture in his or her mind.

➤ Tell the story more than once. Use it again another day — if it was interesting the first time, it will be the second and third times, too. When your child gets used to the story, ask him to tell it back. The more times the story is told, the more understanding the child will get about the main idea.

➤ Don't be surprised if your children remind you of your tale — even when they've grown up! Parents' stories stay with children for years. That's what makes them so powerful in carrying ideas you want your children to remember.

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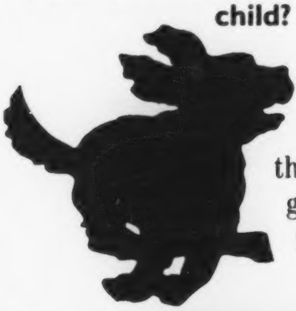
Step 1. Think of something that happened to you, or someone you know, as a child that was really meaningful – an event that is still clear in your memory even to this day.

An example: When I learned how to ride a bike on my parents' farm, my father would tell me how far I could go. We had a long winding road that was lined with pine trees, and as I grew older I was allowed to go farther and farther. At first I could only go to the first pine tree, which my parents could see from the house.

Step 2. Think about how you will tell the story. How should it begin, what should be in the middle, and how should it end?

An example: I would probably start by telling about the day my brother disappeared on his bike. Nobody knew where he was and my parents were very frightened. We all went to look for him and finally found him at the end of the road. Then I would tell about the rules my parents made up after that, and how I felt about them. I'd probably end the story telling my daughter about how I remember that big pine tree as both a safe place and an exciting place, and how it reminds me that as we get older we can keep going farther and farther. I think she'd be able to picture that pine tree and remember it.

Step 3. How will you make sure that the point you want to make is clear to your child?



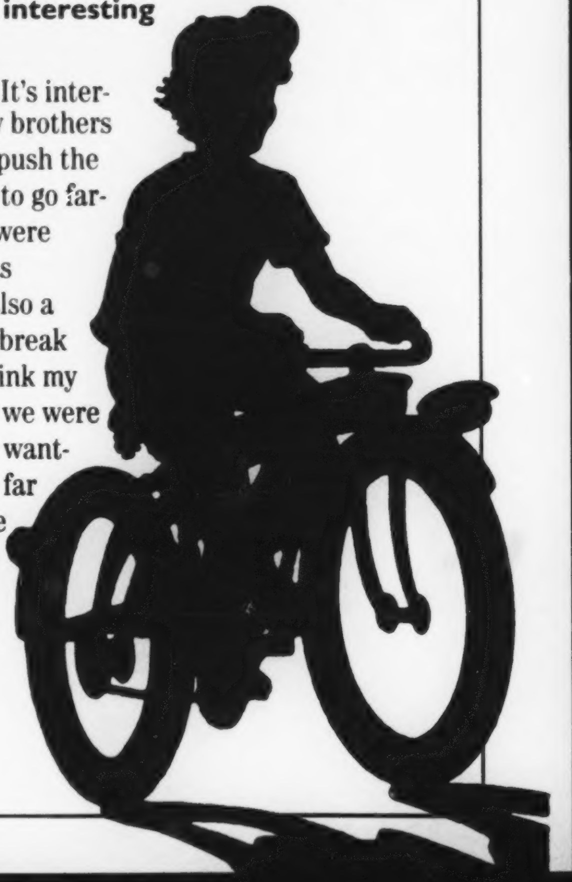
An example: I would ask her some questions, like “Why do you think Papa was scared to go past the first pine tree?” and “Why do you think Papa's mother and father wanted to know where he was all the time?” I might even ask her to tell the story back to me, so I could see what her understanding is about it, and what she thought was important.

Step 4. Think about why this would be a good story to tell your child.

An example: I think it is a good story because it shows how mothers and fathers take care of their children by giving them boundaries. My daughter is trying to be sneaky about breaking rules and I want her to know that I tried to break the rules too when I was a boy. She needs to know that it's nice to have rules – they are meant to help keep you safe – but sometimes rules can be hard to follow.

Step 5. Besides the basic ideas that you want your child to get from the story, what else is interesting about it?

An example: It's interesting how my brothers and I used to push the limits and try to go farther than we were allowed. It was thrilling but also a little scary to break the rules. I think my parents knew we were doing it. They wanted to see how far we'd go before they stopped us to make sure we were safe.



STOP, LOOK, AND LISTEN

A million messages want your child's attention

LOOK AT US.
ORDER ME NOW

If a car were speeding down the street toward your son, would you throw yourself in its path to push your child to safety? If a drug dealer tried to sell drugs to your daughter, would you jump in to stop the deal?

Most parents would jump first, think later. They would just take action. Their desire to protect children is a natural part of being a mother or father.

Young children are surrounded every day from the outside by powerful influences...

- ➤ People on TV want them to **think** something....
- ➤ Advertisers want them to **buy** something....
- ➤ Friends want them to **do** something....

If an advertiser came to you and said, "May I sell something to your child?" you would have the chance to say yes or no. You'd be able to protect your child and allow only the influences that you want. When an advertiser is talking directly to your child on TV, you don't have the chance to say no. Or do you?

Young children don't have the experience or skills to decide between a good idea and a bad idea. Preschool children need someone to act as mediator — to help them understand the influences that are all around.

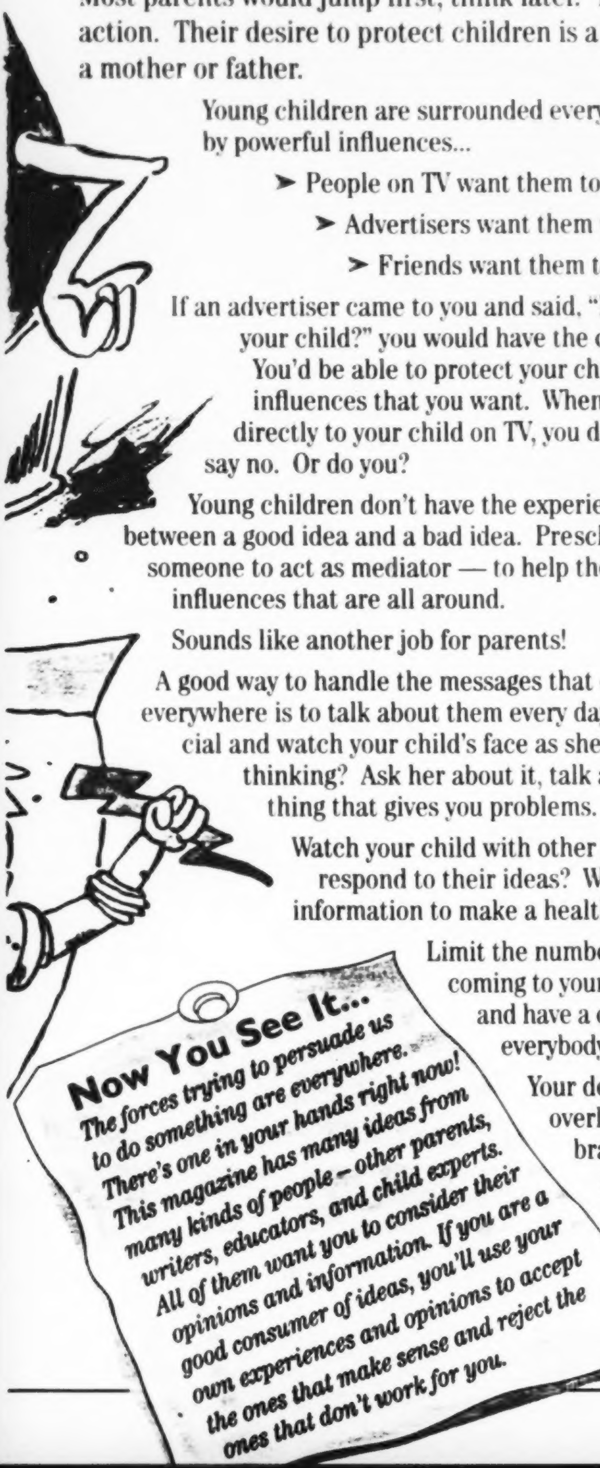
Sounds like another job for parents!

A good way to handle the messages that come at children from everywhere is to talk about them every day. Listen to a commercial and watch your child's face as she listens, too. What is she thinking? Ask her about it, talk about it, and correct anything that gives you problems.

Watch your child with other kids. How does he respond to their ideas? When does he need other information to make a healthy decision?

Limit the number of messages that are coming to your child. Turn off the TV, and have a conversation about what everybody did today, for example.

Your defense against message overload is to push your own brand of messages, and protect your child from other messages you don't like. Don't be afraid to advertise your values!



Now You See It...

The forces trying to persuade us to do something are everywhere. There's one in your hands right now! This magazine has many ideas from many kinds of people – other parents, writers, educators, and child experts. All of them want you to consider their opinions and information. If you are a good consumer of ideas, you'll use your own experiences and opinions to accept the ones that make sense and reject the ones that don't work for you.

What can I say?

While you're watching TV, you see a beer commercial where everyone is having a good time on the beach. It looks as if the way to be popular and happy is to drink that kind of beer.

What can you say?

"Do you think people need to drink beer to have a good time? Let's think of some great times we had playing or having fun. Did we need beer then?"

Your son is sitting at breakfast looking at the back of a cereal box, which advertises a new toy — the Tractoids. He says, "Mom, I want those."

What can you say?

"Well, let's put that on the list for your birthday. You just got a new truck — show me how it works."

You're watching your daughter and five of her friends playing Follow the Leader in the park. They're playing safely until they go under the swings.

What can you say?

"Remember the rules about walking under the swing! Everybody should play Follow the Leader over here, where it's safer."

It's dinner time, and your child wants soda instead of milk. "I saw people on TV drinking soda with their supper!" he argues.

What can you say?

"Soda is really sweet, so it's kind of like dessert. Sometimes you can have it, and sometimes you can't. Let's save the soda for picnic days. Besides, milk helps you grow stronger."

YOU, ME AND TV

How you watch is as important as what you watch

BY LEVAR BURTON

Making a story an adventure: LeVar Burton in the *Reading Rainbow* episode "Ruth Laws Thrills a Nation."

Have you ever had the feeling, sitting in a theater waiting for a movie to start, that something incredible is about to happen? The screen is dark, just waiting to be filled up with an exciting story. You're squirming in your seat, checking your watch, hoping that the story will make you laugh, or feel, or think. It's almost like being five years old again, sitting on someone's knee with a storybook open in front of you.

Television can be like that, too. People sometimes complain that TV isn't very good, and I agree that some television isn't worth watching. But the more I grow as an actor and a writer, the more I realize that watching television programs — when they are done well — can be a stimulating way to spend some time.

In my career, I've worked hard to choose my acting roles based on the quality of the story. For example, *Reading Rainbow* tells stories to discover the great wonder and variety of people around us — their ideas, talents, and experiences. Through books, the show encourages viewers to think about their potential and all of the incredible things they could do with their lives. *Star Trek: The Next Generation* has a similar message, showing that we are all different and that the greatest adventure is learning about each other and thriving in each other's company.

These programs — and many others — have something else in common. They can be watched by people of different ages, opening the way for parents and children to watch together. Parents can enjoy them on one level, while children may get something completely different out of them. **But watching TV *together* gives parents and kids the time to compare their ideas, to get a sense of what each is thinking.**

You see, when the TV is turned on with a good story, the mind is turned on, too. New ideas will flow. For example, suppose you and your five-year-old just watched a puppet show on TV. In the story, a little girl was sad but nobody could figure out why. As you're watching, you might begin to wonder out loud about what things make your daughter sad. She might wonder aloud why people are acting the way they are in the story.

Here's a great chance for parent and child to talk together about what they are seeing and hearing – to ask questions about what the characters are doing, and predict how the story will end. In those few minutes, you as a parent get to reflect on your child's interests and concerns, and your child gets to express her feelings about the story and about how she is feeling.

We learn more through stories than any other way, except experience – stories like the one told by a great grandfather about his life as a boy, the story in a newspaper article, a good novel, or a TV comedy. Even very young children can learn by hearing, seeing, and telling stories — and especially by recognizing how some stories have the same basic ideas.

As your child hears more stories over time, she forms a more complete picture of the world – the world beyond your home and neighborhood, as well as the world in each person's heart and mind. Why is it so important to spend time telling stories with children, even when life can be so full and busy?

Stories let every child peek into his own "insides" to start getting ideas about what he might want to do, and to find the powers to do it.

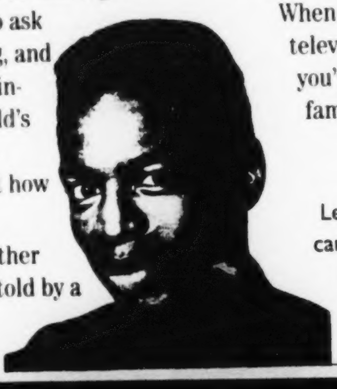
Stories let every child know that whatever she thinks, or however she feels, someone else thinks and feels that way, too. Stories put children in touch with like minds.

Stories shed light on the amazing differences among people, making children comfortable with, and excited about, human variety. Stories can lessen fear.

Stories take children to new places and introduce them to new people. They inspire them to want to have special experiences in their lives..

When a television story can capture any of these ideas, it can be truly magical. It's just like the magic in a book. When a story reaches out from the page, or from the television screen, and makes a difference in your life, you've had an experience...one that is well worth your family's time.

I'll see you next time — in a great story!



LeVar Burton is the host of *Reading Rainbow*, which can be seen on your local public television station. LeVar is also a cast member of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*.

Helping children learn *rules and limits*

Every child must learn that we all live within limits.

Even preschoolers need to understand that rules protect them from harm, give them guidance about the things they can and cannot do, and protect the safety of others. Knowing how to follow rules is the first step to becoming a good decision maker, to making decisions that help children grow up to be drug free adults.

Parents play the major role in a child's life in establishing rules and limits. They set the tone for children to recognize...

... the rules that should not be broken
... the limits that mean children can't always do what they want
... that some things can only be done at the right time and the right place
... that they can make some safe choices for themselves

Parents need to help their preschool children practice making some decisions, and that depends on children's knowing the rules, knowing the limits, and knowing when it's OK for them to decide and when a parent should decide. Fortunately, parents are helped by the fact that preschoolers want and need rules and limits to help them slowly put together ideas about allowable behaviors and well-considered choices.

In this section, child development expert Barbara Bowman answers parents' questions about the kinds of choices children should be allowed to make. After that, get ready to think about your own family's rules and how they work. Educator Maurice Elias then navigates the difficult road to setting limits – when rules aren't really needed, but the limits of behavior need to be set. Lastly, you'll have the chance to answer questions that test your own beliefs about rules and limits.

Letting Children Choose

Why is it important to let young children make some decisions on their own? An expert answers parents' questions.

Why do some children use alcohol or other drugs, smoke, or do other dangerous things? And how can parents prepare their children to make smart choices throughout life?

Children who get lots of practice in making good decisions get better at it with time and become more confident in their thinking. Even four-or five-year-old children can try their decision-making skills with help from parents.

But what kinds of decisions can young children make? How can parents allow them to make choices and keep them safe at the same time? Child development expert Barbara Bowman has these answers for parents:

Parent — Why should I allow my child to make choices on her own? Is it really that important?

Ms. Bowman — There are two good reasons for letting children choose. First, children need to know that you respect what they want and need. They feel better about themselves, and more confident, when you value and respect what they like.

There are many kinds of choices and some are more important than others. **Preference choices** are neither right nor wrong — they just reflect what your child likes best, like vanilla ice cream instead of chocolate.

Thinking choices have good or bad results. For instance, to be safe, children must choose to stay on the sidewalk rather than run in the street. They must choose not to climb up on the window ledge, or touch the hot stove, or throw their dinner on the floor.

To make thinking choices, children need information about the consequences. For instance, Mom gets angry or takes the food away when a two-year-old throws it on the floor. Gradually — sometimes very gradually — she learns to avoid Mom's anger, or the loss of dinner, by not throwing it on the floor. Young children don't understand that throwing food is wasteful or that Mom doesn't like washing the floor. They can't know that these are reasons for them to choose to not throw their food. The thing to remember about thinking choices is that children can't make the right ones, for the right reasons, until they know enough about the world. Until then, parents are responsible for seeing that children do the right thing.

When it is safe, children can make thinking choices and become better at solving problems. For instance, you may ask your daughter whether she would rather clean her room now with your help, or later by herself.

Parent — How do I know when it's a good idea to let my child make the choice?

Ms. Bowman — Here are three questions you can ask yourself that will help you with that:

What do you believe? What do you think is right? Even if other parents let their children play in the lot, it might not seem right for your children to do so on a Sunday, for instance. If you don't want your children to do what the others are doing, find other parents who do believe what you do, and let your children play together.

What are the common, accepted practices of families around you? Other parents in your community may have information and ideas about what they feel safe and acceptable for their children. Consider asking other parents what they think so you can take advantage of their experience and get clues that will help you make decisions. However, if you disagree with the community's practices and want something different for your child, that's okay. Your opinions are more important than what others believe.

What's right for your child? Think about your child's age, as well as skills and talents. Is he so curious that he might pick up something dangerous when he's playing with others in the vacant lot? Does he follow your rules about leaving dangerous things alone? If not, you may want to limit his outdoor play to times when an older person can be with him. But remember, he still needs a chance to play with the other children, and you might have to make special efforts to supervise him.

Parent —My child has a hard time making choices. Why?

Ms. Bowman — Some children are afraid of making the wrong choice or don't trust their own ability to size up the situation and choose correctly. Sometimes they are afraid that adults or friends will disapprove, so they wait to see what others think or do. Other children simply can't slow down long enough to consider their options. And some just want **everything.**

Sometimes, the child might be hungry or tired; most of us have trouble making decisions after a hard day's work or before supper! All of these reactions are normal and all children have them sometimes. Sometimes parents give their children too many choices to make. It overwhelms them. Asking a child to decide whether Mommy or Daddy should put her to bed can be too hard if the child wants **both.**

The goal is to let children make more thinking choices gradually over time.

Parent — How can I prevent my child from making a dangerous choice?

Ms. Bowman — Don't allow or require your children to make choices they are too young to make, choices with results they can not understand or appreciate. Young children don't know enough to cross the street or use a knife safely. They should not talk to a stranger because they don't know when it's safe.

Parents need to make those kinds of decisions. But children can learn about how to make hard choices by hearing parents think out loud about them. When crossing the street, say to your preschooler, "A car is coming, and we might not be able to cross the street in time, so we'll wait." You can encourage your four-year-old to think about how fast the car is travelling. But don't let her make the decision about when to cross the street. Let her practice thinking about when it's safe by playing with toy cars on a ramp.

Parent — Is it OK for me to decide for my child?

Ms. Bowman — Absolutely! When the results of a decision could be dangerous, or when a parent doesn't have time to let the child decide, parents must make the choice. Some things are also clearly illegal and not a matter of choice for young children, like whether to sit in a car seat or wear a seat belt. There are also times when family members or others around you consider something to be inappropriate — and you may want to temporarily withdraw a child's right to decide.

Also, don't feel that you always need to explain in detail when you don't allow your child to do something. If your child wants to pick up the dirty lollipop someone threw on the ground, it can be enough to say that it is "yucky" and "we don't touch things like that because they make us sick."

Parent — Do I have to give up drinking or smoking if I don't want my child to smoke or drink when he grows up?

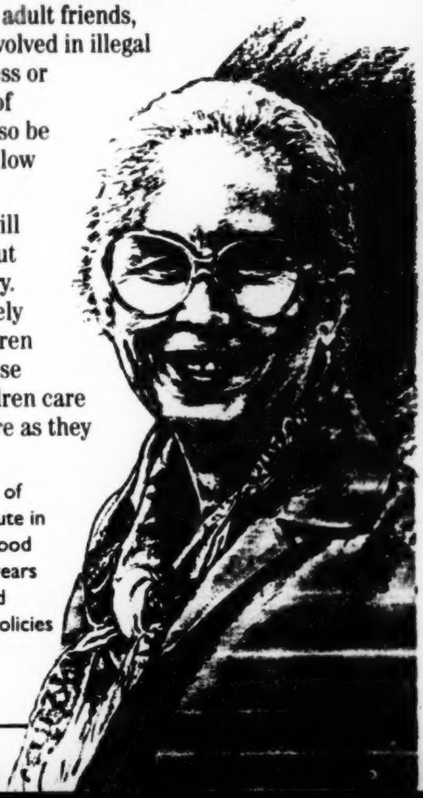
Ms. Bowman — Some things are socially acceptable for adults and not for children. You can say that directly. If you use alcohol, set an example of responsible use and make sure your children understand what happens when adults use alcohol irresponsibly. Make sure your child understands the seriousness of "breaking the law" and make sure he knows that you will not allow drinking.

In the case of smoking, if you can't quit but don't want your preschooler to get the wrong idea about smoking, you might talk about it. Share the struggle you're having: "Mom sure would like to quit because it's not good for me, but quitting is very hard. I want you to learn that it's a bad idea to start smoking, so let's talk about it." Children usually want to do what their parents do. It will be an uphill battle convincing them not to smoke if they see you smoking.

Parent — Are there really things I can do with my five-year-old now that will keep her away from drugs in the future?

Ms. Bowman — Yes. The first, best defense is a loving relationship and good communication. Listen to what she has to say, and respect how she feels and what she thinks. Surround your child with adult friends, family, and others who are not involved in illegal drug use and do not drink to excess or smoke. This will provide a sense of balance for your child; she will also be more ready to understand and follow your family's rules.

Being around those people will make it easier for you to talk about why healthy choices are necessary. Otherwise, children will most likely do what other children do. Children tend to do the same things as those people they care about, and children care about their friends more and more as they get older.



Ms. Barbara Bowman is Director of Graduate Studies at the Erikson Institute in Chicago, Illinois, and is an early childhood specialist. She has worked for many years with young children, their parents, and teachers as well as those who make policies that affect families.

On Top Of The World

Rules keep children safe as they explore life

In the world of a four-year-old, everything is big and inviting. (And sometimes scary.) So many things to touch. So many experiments to conduct: things to lift, drop, climb, taste, smell, jump from, and break.

How can you trust your child not to jump from something too high? Not to eat poison? Not to smash a dish on the floor? Not to say a dirty word? There are many ways to control and limit children's experiments and many different beliefs about how to do it. Almost everyone agrees that consistent rules for children are important.

Adults know the need for rules. Rules give shape to everyone's life. For children, rules set safe limits so they can learn to live with others.

In fact, children not only need rules, they want them. Watch the look on your little boy's face when something bad happens. He'll look to you for an answer: what do I do now? Rules are especially welcomed by preschoolers when they are tired or unsure. Rules give a sense of comfort.

Thinking about the rules you make is a good way to learn about good rule-making. Try this activity to help you figure out how your family sets and follows rules.

Rule-making is a tough job for a parent

To be both fair and consistent, there are many things to consider:

What rules should be true for all preschoolers?

What rules are special for my child because of his or her personality or abilities?

What rules must never be broken?

What rules can I let go sometimes, depending on the situation?

What rules help my child be liked by others?

How do I know it's time to change the rules (when my child gets older or her skills improve)?

What happens when my child breaks the rules?

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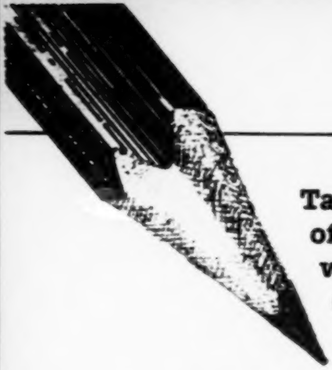


Take a pen or pencil and fill out the lists below. Look at the range of rules you've put into place. Which ones are good ones and which ones do not work so well?

(An example is given to get you going. But remember, think about your own child when answering.)

Which rules have I set that help keep my child healthy?
Example: I give him juice or milk instead of sweet drinks.

Which rules have I set that help keep my child safe?
Example: She may not answer the door unless I am with her.

Which rules are specific to my child, and why?
Example: Billy gets lots of ear infections, so he must always wear a hat outdoors in cold weather.

Which rules exist for the safety of others?
Example: We do not allow our child to throw rocks near people or animals.

Which rules were OK when my child was younger but don't apply any more?
Example: We used to tell our daughter to stay in bed until we came to get her. Now she is big enough to get out of bed herself.

Which rules really only exist for your (the parent's) convenience?
Example: I had a rule that said my son could not take the pots and pans out of the cupboard to play with them. But I guess that rule was for me. The noise got on my nerves and I hated putting the pots away every night.

Think about your lists of rules.

Do they seem like good ones? How well do you think your child understands each rule? What fair consequences have you put into place for breaking the rules? Are you consistent with the consequences so that your child can link his or her behaviors with the outcomes?

Exploring The Outer Limits

An expert's advice for giving children signs about the limits of behavior

The single hardest job parents have is getting children to understand that there are limits. Not every situation needs a rule, but sometimes children need to stop what they are doing (even if it's something they are allowed to do at other times). It's part of learning how to be part of the family. Children need to recognize that there are other people around and other things going on.

Kid's Limit
2 MILES

This can be confusing for children. It's easy to understand a rule — a rule is **always** the same. But if it's OK to color in a coloring book before bedtime, why isn't it OK to color when everyone's trying to get ready to go to work or day care? If it's OK to throw stones into the lake, why isn't it OK to throw stones into the pool? If it's OK to yell and be loud playing outside, why isn't it OK at dinner?

Parents need energy and patience (and sometimes a sense of humor) to get these ideas across and make them stick. It's hard — as Dr. Maurice Elias will tell you — but he offers some basic good ideas that can support your effort. Here, Dr. Elias presents four situations almost all parents face.

The morning story

Getting my three-year-old daughter ready for day care in the morning is a nightmare. Nothing is easy. She won't help get herself dressed. She won't eat breakfast. If I ask her to do something, she'll say no. What should I do?

Many parents will agree that the morning is the most stressful part of the day. So much needs to be done, and other responsibilities are waiting for you, if you ever get out the door.

Think about what **really** needs to get done in the morning. Don't overload yourselves with things that could be done earlier or later. Choose the important tasks and set a regular routine to get them done. After a while, your child will respect your consistency. And she'll understand that she can't do everything she wants when the family is so busy.

Involve your child in morning chores. Ask her to help set out her clothes the night before, or put the cereal box out on the table so it's ready in the morning. As she becomes more a part of the process, she will want to help it along, rather than get in its way. But some days, if she doesn't have much breakfast or isn't wearing matching clothes, don't be concerned. She'll survive, and you can use your energy for more pressing matters.

Remember to check your routine every few weeks to make sure it still works for everyone. Sometimes the situation changes, and each family member's needs change. Be ready to change the routine. **Decide on what's most important.**

Agreement between parents

My husband and I disagree on how to get our five-year-old son to sleep. On the nights that I work, my husband lets him stay up late and fall asleep on our bed. I think he should go to bed at a regular time and learn to fall asleep in his own bed.

Setting limits only works if you and your husband agree on what the limits are. You must **both** agree to a routine and stick to it, or the limit won't be clear to your son. Before you do, find out if there are reasons why your son doesn't want to sleep in his room. Is he afraid? Does he think he'll miss out on something?

With those questions answered, talk about a routine that makes sense, one that takes into account your son's worries. Whatever routine you decide on, it should include the idea that "good night" means "goodbye until tomorrow." No more hugs, kisses, water, or stories. (Of course, he might really need to make a bathroom trip.)

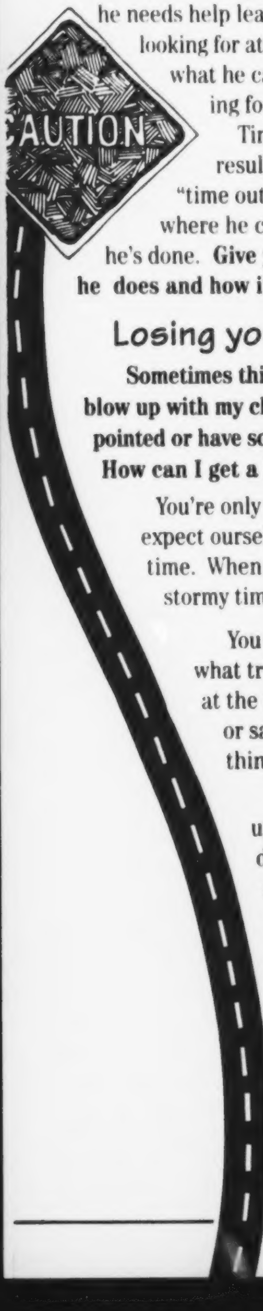
You will need to be supportive and gentle, but firm. Children are better off with a consistent, appropriate sleep routine. Once you set it up, stay with it. It may take a few days, but your son will catch on. You might want to support him as he gets used to the schedule.

For example, you might reward him with a star on a refrigerator chart for every day he succeeds in following the schedule. **Be consistent.**

When reason fails

How do you handle a defiant four-year-old? My son will keep teasing his sister even when I tell him all the reasons why he should stop. I admit, sometimes when we're all playing together, we tease and have fun with each other. How can I make him understand the difference?

When a child just won't behave, it's a signal that he needs help learning the limits. While he may be looking for attention, he's testing the boundaries of what he can do in the real world. He's also looking for ways to control his own behavior.



Time to think about his actions and the results can help a lot. Some people use "time out" to put the child in a safe, quiet place where he can think for a few minutes about what he's done. **Give your child time to think about what he does and how it affects others.**

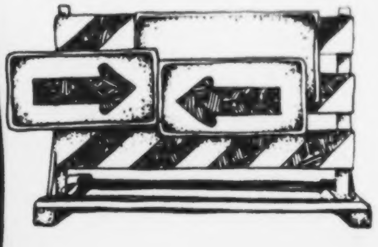
Losing your cool

Sometimes things are going along just fine, then I'll blow up with my child. I might be angry or really disappointed or have some other feeling I really can't describe. How can I get a handle on this?

You're only human, even though we sometimes expect ourselves to be calm and perfect all the time. When there's a preschooler in the house, stormy times can come up without warning.

You need to think very specifically about what triggered your anger. What was going on at the time? Was it something your child did or said? Was it his attitude? Was it something that could be prevented in the future?

Children don't usually set out to upset you. When they do, it's an accident. So you might ask yourself, "What did he mean to do?" Was he just curious when he dropped the egg on the floor, or was he trying to get your attention? Was he trying to drive you crazy when he screeched at the top of his lungs for the fifth time or was he entertaining himself?



When you figure out exactly what was going on, then you can address the situation more calmly. Make it clear what he did and why he shouldn't do it any more.

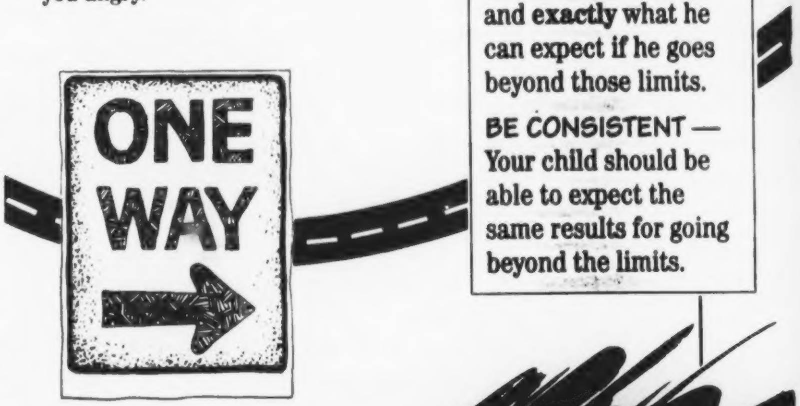
And if it's a situation that can be avoided in the future, watch for ways to steer clear of it. Do yourself and your child a favor, and stay away from situations that will make one or both of you angry. **Think about what really made you angry.**

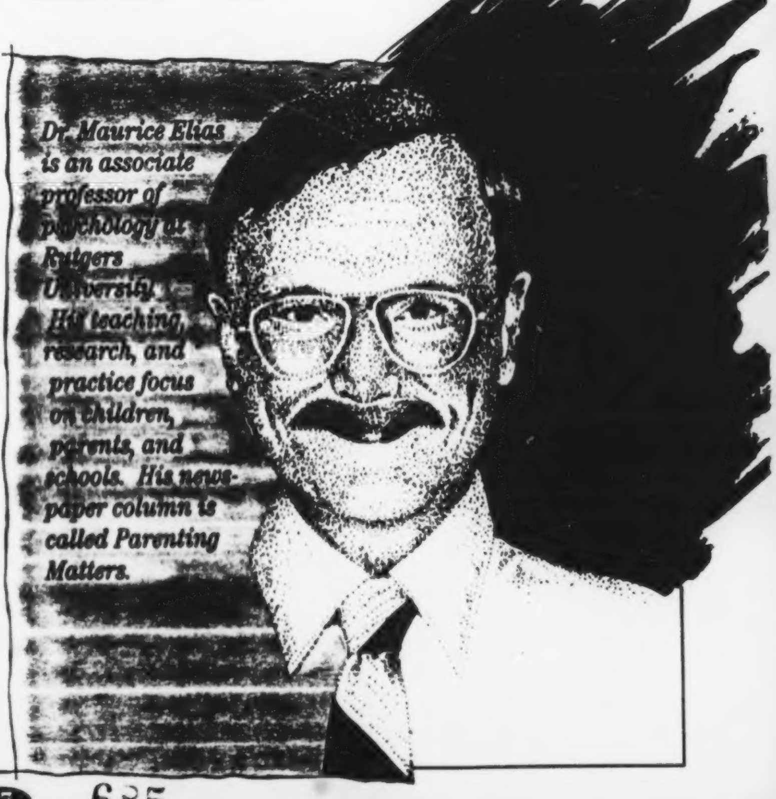
Three clues for setting limits

BE FAIR — Think about your needs and your child's needs when setting limits.

BE CLEAR — Make sure your child knows exactly what the limits are of his behavior, and exactly what he can expect if he goes beyond those limits.

BE CONSISTENT — Your child should be able to expect the same results for going beyond the limits.



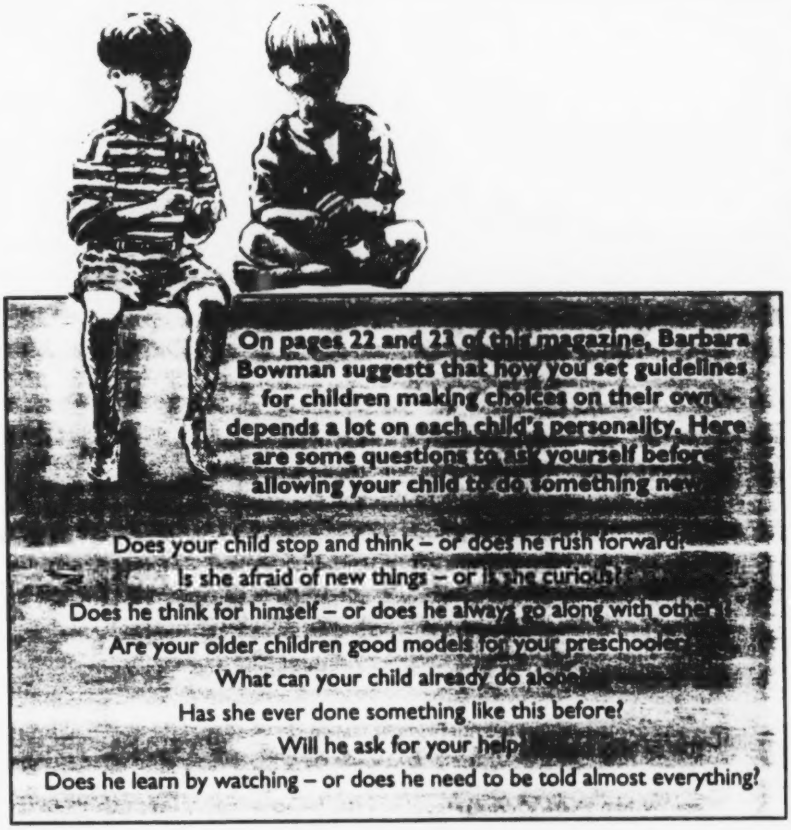


Dr. Maurice Elias is an associate professor of psychology at Rutgers University. His teaching, research, and practice focus on children, parents, and schools. His newspaper column is called Parenting Matters.

What's OK... What's Not OK?

Deciding what's OK for your child to do depends on you and your child — and the situation. There's a right time and a right place for some things. What's right for your family might be different for others. What's right for one child might not be right for another.

How do you usually decide what's OK? Think about the two lists on this page. For the first list, consider the questions. How would you answer them about your child? The second list offers some specific things you might or might not let your child do. How would you answer those questions?



On pages 22 and 23 of this magazine, Barbara Bowman suggests that how you set guidelines for children making choices on their own depends a lot on each child's personality. Here are some questions to ask yourself before allowing your child to do something new.

Does your child stop and think – or does he rush forward?

Is she afraid of new things – or is she curious?

Does he think for himself – or does he always go along with others?

Are your older children good models for your preschooler?

What can your child already do alone?

Has she ever done something like this before?

Will he ask for your help?

Does he learn by watching – or does he need to be told almost everything?

Would you let your child...

- play in the kitchen alone?
- go to the store with older kids?
- watch you drink or smoke?
- use scissors?
- stay at the playground by himself?
- get the mail?
- cross the street?
- cut food with a sharp knife?
- visit neighbors alone?
- fix a meal with other kids?
- stay up late to watch TV?
- get his own medicine?
- take care of plants?

Answer "yes," "no," or "it depends" for each. If you answered "it depends," what does it depend on?

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BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Helping children by having *positive outlooks on life*

If you've ever said something that was not so nice, only to hear your child say it later, you know how easily children pick up things from their parents. Their eyes and ears are always open. Their natural tendency is to keep learning to keep growing. One way preschoolers learn is to watch Mom and Dad and how they deal with life.

The way parents react to the daily grind and to life's surprises makes immediate impressions on children. Preschoolers learn attitudes as easily as they learn how to count by watching how others do it and practicing. They can learn to be grumpy, curious, mistrustful, or frightened if their parents are that way, too. If parents are especially negative about life and its possibilities, children might adopt those feelings and become people who feel bad every day. People who feel that way look for ways out, and drugs can be their unhealthy solution. It's critical that parents avoid passing on attitudes to children that can cause them to develop negative attitudes and to become more likely to use drugs.

Certainly no one can be happy all the time, and parents must also help children understand this reality. The trick is finding the middle ground between gloom and doom and dealing successfully with the stresses and responsibilities of everyday living. The article on the next page tells how one mother managed to do it.

BEAT THE BLUES!...

We all have days when nothing goes right. But some of us have so much to deal with that we start to think nothing ever will go right. Sometimes people grow up with these negative attitudes, hearing them often from their parents. And it's easy to pass them on to the next generation, too. Lucinda's story tells how she works at breaking the pattern of negative attitudes for herself and her children.

Lucinda had plenty of reasons to feel blue. There was never enough money to go around. She was raising three children by herself and she couldn't count on her parents for much support. Most of her friends were having problems of their own, too, and couldn't help her much.

It was pretty hard to get up in the morning, let alone look forward to doing things with the children. She found herself yelling at them a lot, then feeling bad about it afterwards. The children were less and less interested in going places with her when she did find the energy or the money to take them out. Instead of being excited, they just wanted to watch TV.

To the children, Lucinda's ideas about going out were "boring" or "dumb." Her four-year-old daughter seemed to cry at every little thing. Her eight-year-old son complained all the time. As their attitudes got worse, so did Lucinda's — it was a bad cycle.

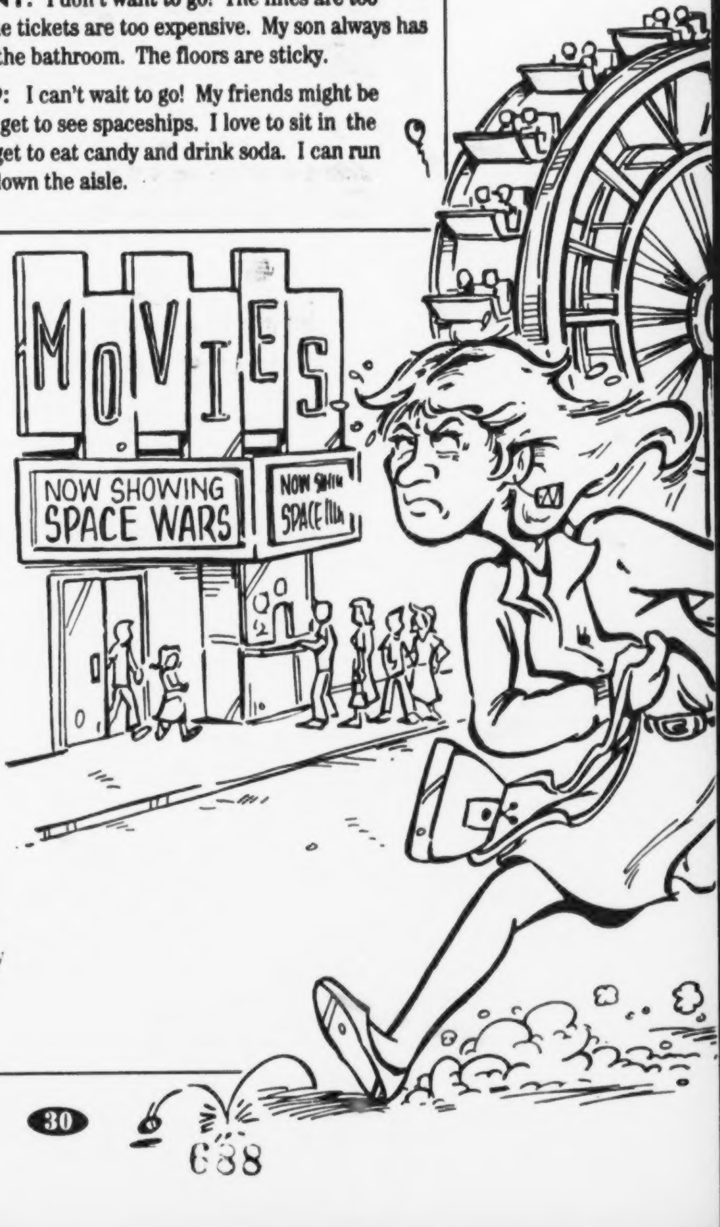
A friend invited Lucinda to a parent meeting one afternoon. As she listened to people talk, Lucinda heard a lot that reminded her of her own life. Many of the other women lived in even worse situations. But she noticed how many of them seemed hopeful and were looking for ways to cope with their lives, even though they hadn't been able to change anyone else like their bosses, husbands, or children. Their parents or spouses still drank, their children were still demanding, they were still broke. But they said they were changing the way they thought about things.

One woman at the meeting said something that really stuck with Lucinda: "When I first started coming here, I couldn't find anything good about my life or anybody in it. So I decided to try to find one good thing every day. Maybe it was that my children didn't fight on the way to school, or it didn't rain. Little by little it began to give me a new way to look at my life. I had a roof over my head. I had food to eat. I wasn't alone, because I had my children."

THE MOVIE THEATRE

PARENT: I don't want to go! The lines are too long. The tickets are too expensive. My son always has to go to the bathroom. The floors are sticky.

CHILD: I can't wait to go! My friends might be there. I get to see spaceships. I love to sit in the dark. I get to eat candy and drink soda. I can run up and down the aisle.



...THE ATTITUDE CYCLE CAN BE BROKEN

Lucinda tried looking for the small, good things in her days. At first, some days went by and she couldn't find a thing. Then she noticed that somebody, a complete stranger, smiled at her on the way to work. Another day, she read a story in the paper that made her laugh. One night, her daughter told her what a good casserole she made.

Nicole, another parent in the discussion group, suggested that Lucinda shouldn't try to tackle all her problems at once. Nicole said she had been worrying about things that might never happen, wasting a lot of time regretting things that she couldn't change. "I try to keep my mind on today," Nicole told Lucinda. "I can't worry about what **might** happen."

Lucinda started to get the idea that she had some choices about what she did, how she spent her time, and especially how she formed her general outlook. She began to feel like she had a little control in her life.

One day, when her children were arguing, it became clear to Lucinda that her children's bad attitudes were like her own. She wanted them to learn that they could make a difference in how things turn out. So when Jess, her eight-year-old, started complaining about his teacher, Lucinda listened carefully. She discovered that Jess was having trouble figuring out fractions. She encouraged him to ask the teacher for help and to bring his book home so he could take more time with math practice.

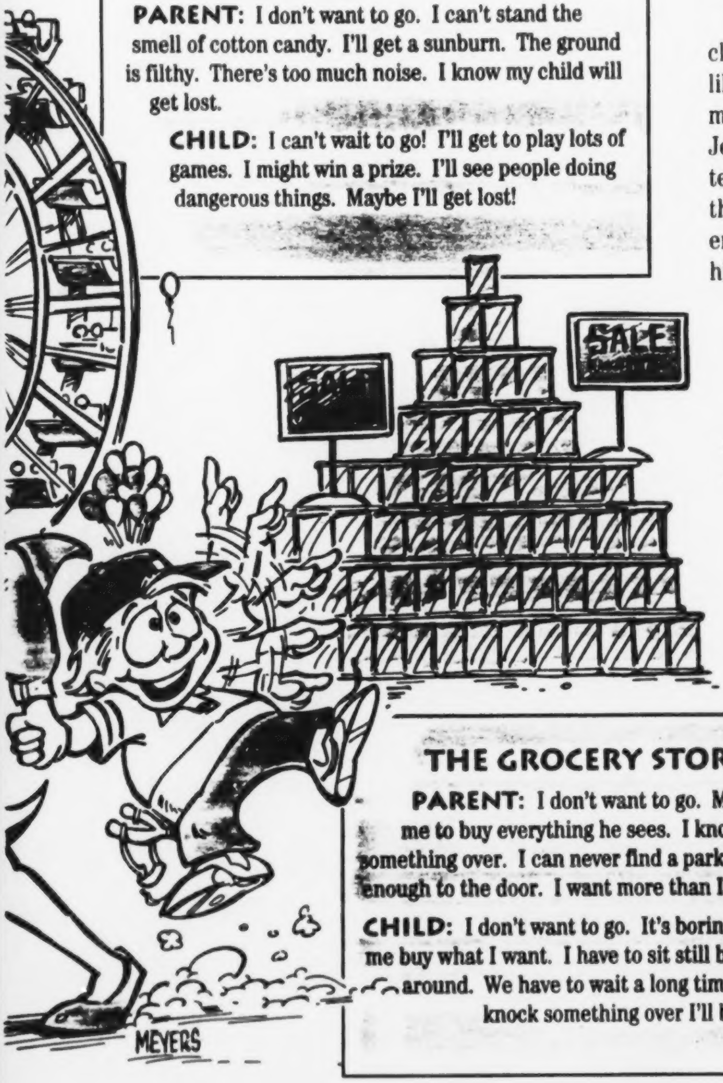
After a month or so, Jess came home excited about the math game he got to play because he figured all his fractions correctly that day. He said, "All you have to do is practice and you can do even the hard stuff."

Lucinda still struggles, and money is still tight, but she's beginning to think she might have some control over that some day, too. She still looks for the little something that makes her laugh, or smile, or feel like she accomplished something. She asks her children to do the same thing, and they make it into a game before going to sleep every night. One night, Lucinda's little girl said, "Ma, the best part of my day today was sitting here talking with you." Lucinda knew for sure that things were starting to get better.

THE CARNIVAL

PARENT: I don't want to go. I can't stand the smell of cotton candy. I'll get a sunburn. The ground is filthy. There's too much noise. I know my child will get lost.

CHILD: I can't wait to go! I'll get to play lots of games. I might win a prize. I'll see people doing dangerous things. Maybe I'll get lost!



THE GROCERY STORE

PARENT: I don't want to go. My child will want me to buy everything he sees. I know he'll knock something over. I can never find a parking space close enough to the door. I want more than I can afford.

CHILD: I don't want to go. It's boring. Mom won't let me buy what I want. I have to sit still but I want to run around. We have to wait a long time in line. If I knock something over I'll be in big trouble.

Your family can build its own community within the larger community around you.

In or near your neighborhood, find out about:

- Preschool programs
- Parks and playgrounds
- Play groups
- Parent support groups

- Health services or clinics

- Libraries
- Adult education programs

- Neighborhood activities
- Citizen associations
- Volunteer programs

- Churches and church programs
- People who share your beliefs

READY!

A guide for parents of preschool children

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